Effect of Context on Internal and External Actor's Perception on COIN

A Monograph
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14. ABSTRACT

Tactical level nuances between COIN by an external and an internal actor are barely distinguishable. The successful COIN practices for an external actor listed in FM 3-24 COIN manual of US Army are well recognized and established principles that are also applicable to COIN conducted by internal actors. At the operational level, however, the context in which both the actors operate is fundamentally different. COIN concepts, most significantly legitimacy, have a different connotation for both of them and therefore require a different approach to achieve. The onus of developing the contextual understanding which leads to a suitable COIN approach lies solely on the internal actor. Therefore, expectations in COIN from internal actors need be assessed as per the dynamics in which they operate. Unrealistic expectations based on external actors' perspective will likely be counterintuitive to the systemic understanding of COIN. Apropos, external actor's approach towards COIN which is tailored specifically to the context in which it operates also needs to be understood. The key is to understand that logic precedes every action and understanding of that logic is instrumental in comprehending the conceptual nuances between COIN conducted by both internal and external actors.

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Abstract

EFFECT OF CONTEXT ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ACTOR'S PERCEPTON ON COIN by MAJOR Ali Iqbal, PAKISTAN ARMY, 57 pages.

Tactical level nuances between COIN by an external and an internal actor are barely distinguishable. The successful COIN practices for an external actor listed in FM 3-24 COIN manual of US Army include maintaining a constant, forward presence with the population, acquiring and disseminating accurate and timely intelligence, and avoiding overreaction to insurgent activity. These well recognized and established principles are also applicable to COIN conducted by internal actors. At the operational level, however, the context in which both the actors operate is fundamentally different. COIN concepts, most significantly legitimacy, have a different connotation for both of them and therefore require a different approach to achieve. The external actor's context is extremely complicated due the presence of numerous actors like the host nation government and its forces, extra regional and regional countries, and domestic audience. On the other hand the internal actor has relatively less complexity as it is dealing with an internal problem that has to be dealt within the context of its own dynamics. Understanding this difference is critical for both the actors. The internal actor has to realize that it cannot blindly adopt the COIN concepts and approach of external actors as both of them face different contexts. At times actions and overtures that seem irresponsible and nonsensical to external actors have an internal history or caveat within whose domain the internal actor has to operate. The onus of developing the contextual understanding which leads to a suitable COIN approach lies with the internal actor. Therefore, expectations in COIN from internal actors need be assessed as per the dynamics in which they operate. Unrealistic expectations based on external actors' perspectives will likely be detrimental to the systemic understanding of COIN. Apropos, external actor's approach towards COIN which is tailored specifically to the context in which it operates also needs to be understood. The key is to understand that logic precedes every action and understanding of that logic is instrumental in comprehending the conceptual nuances between COIN conducted by both internal and external actors.

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ACRONYMS

NWFP	North West Frontier Province
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
MMA	Mutahida Majils-e-Amal
ANP	Awami National Party
COIN	Counterinsurgency
FC	Frontier Corps
TTP	Tactics, techniques, and procedures
US	United States
HN	Host Nation
FM	Field Manual
TNSM	Tehreek-e-Nafaze Shariah Mohammadi
TTP	Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan
MFU	Maulana Fazalullah
AO	Area of operations
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
AP	Associated Press
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
LTTE	Liberation Tamil Tiger Elam

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Introduction

Like conventional wars, counterinsurgencies (COIN) vary in their form and are dependent on the dynamics and the environment in which they are being conducted. In the contemporary era understanding of COIN is largely driven by the British experiences in Malaya, and United States (US) experience in places like Republic of the Philippines, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan.[1] The new COIN doctrine manual FM 3-24, codifies that experience which is viewed by many nations as an most authentic document for undertaking COIN.[2] However, on the other hand internal actors such as Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Philippines, and Colombia have achieved a series of recent successes in defeating insurgencies. The basic principles and TTPs (Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures) of conducting COIN have been generally the same for both an internal force that operates within its borders and an external force operating in a foreign or occupied country. However, conceptually at the operational level both the internal and external actors' perceptions on COIN are vastly dissimilar due to the different context in which they operate. This leads to the hypothesis that at the tactical level COIN conducted by an internal and external actor is fairly similar; it is the different context in which both of these actors operate that makes operational level concepts, primarily legitimacy, different from one another. This distinction has to be understood while planning, conducting, and managing expectations from COIN in both the scenarios of combating internal and external insurgencies. Recognition of this difference is vital to foster international cooperation in understanding and conducting COIN. The Pakistan Army's operations in Swat Valley give a perspective of COIN by an internal force which operates in a context different to the ones faced by an external force.

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[1]Headquarters Department of Army, *FM 3-24.2 Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2009), 1-1.

[2]United Kingdom Ministry of Defense, *British Army Field Manual Counterinsurgency* (London:UK MOD Printing Office, 2009), Foreword.

COIN is not a new phenomenon for Pakistan's army. Prior to 9/11 it faced two main insurgencies, Balochistan in 1970 and Bangladesh (Formerly East Pakistan) in 1973.[3] Whereas, the latter broke away and formed another country through the military intervention of India, the former remains a region of Pakistan, thanks mostly to military efforts.[4] This active phase of involvement in irregular wars was followed by a quiet period in the COIN arena and an active focus on the conventional threat from India. COIN in this period was not a primary concern and was not refined or given the due attention that it would later merit.

After the commencement of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001 and Pakistan's active military operation, called Al Mizan in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) the threat from insurgency resurfaced with a vengeance.[5] However the current dilemma of terrorism and insurgency which Pakistan is presently facing cannot be understood without a holistic understanding of its history. The lineage of the present environment can be traced to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan which made Pakistan a frontline state aided by an anti-Soviet bloc that provided human resources to augment the Afghan Mujahedeen and the Arab militants fighting the "Russian Invaders."[6] This led to promoting the religious fervor of the nation to help their brethren in trouble across the border. Through both material and moral support from West and the Middle East a large portion of the country's populace, especially those of Pashtun heritage, became galvanized to fight the Soviets using the motivation of religion and the commonality of history and culture.[7] The action taken by these people from the North West Frontier Province (NWFP)

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[3]Robert Wirsing, Baloch Nationalism and the Geopolitics of Energy Resources*: The Changing Context of Separatism in Pakistan* (n.p.: Strategic Studies Institute U. S. Army War Co, 2008), 1.

[4]Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, Its Army, and the Wars Within* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, USA, 2008), 270-71.

[5]Asheley J. Tellis, *Pakistan and the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008), 9.

[6]Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire* (London: Simon and Schuster UK Ltd, 2006), 274.

[7]Seth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2010), 6.

was decisive in the defeat of the Soviets and the restoration of the Pashtun way of life in both

Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan. The second and third order effects of this transition

to militancy, which ensured the Mujahedeen victory, were grave for Pakistan's security. This

included the permanent militarization of the northwestern region, the presence of foreign fighters

who travelled freely from Afghanistan to the FATA through a highly porous border, and the

remnants of standing radical groups that had not been reintegrated back into society due to the

lack of programs, funds, and national will. This was accentuated by US sanctions against Pakistan

as it had lost strategic significance following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.[8] The

sanctions caused a snowball effect resulting in a complex situation as Pakistan became further

isolated to deal with the after effects of the protracted Afghan war and roots of militancy which

had started to expand. Militant networks which sprung up in Pakistan are depicted in figure 1:

Figure 1 - Militant Network in Pakistan[9]

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[8]Steve LaMontagne, "*India-Pakistan Sanctions Legislation Fact Sheet*," Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, http://www.armscontrolcenter.org/policy/nonproliferation/articles/india_pakistan_sanctions/ (accessed August 12, 2010).

[9]Seth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2010), xiii.

As a result of this not only did the Balochistan insurgent movement resurface, but other radical groups with separatist designs came to the forefront in the FATA.[10] Pakistan's active participation in the Global War on Terror and opposition to radical groups further fueled militant and insurgent activities.[11]

Swat located in North West Pakistan, was one of the areas which were adversely affected as a result of the resurgence of militancy after 9/11.[12] Swat, a scenic valley known for its beautiful mountain ranges, tourism industry and expansive fruit orchards along the Swat River has been a cradle of civilization since the third century BC. It is located in the northwest of Pakistan in the administrative district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (Previously NWFP).[13] Swat is approximately 90 miles from Islamabad with Chitral in the North West, Dir in the West, Buner in the South East and Kohistan and Shangla in the East.[14] Maps of Swat and its surrounding areas are attached as Appendix 1, 2 and 3.

Commencing active operations in November 2007, the Pakistani Army was initially able to beat back militancy and temporarily secure a major portion of the Swat Valley over a period of just four months.[15] The apparent retreat of militants was inaccurately characterized as "Mission Accomplished."[16] Rather than focusing on consolidating the gains and addressing the root causes

[10]Alan Kronstadt, *Pakistan-US Relations* (n.p.: Congressional Research Service, 2009), 7.

[11]Asheley J. Tellis, *Pakistan and the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008), 3.

[12]Seth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2010), 26.

[13]Noor Haq, *THE OPERATION RAH-E-RAST* (Islamabad: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2009), 15.

[14]Asheley J. Tellis, *Pakistan and the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008), 19.

[15]Amin Ahmed, "*Army claims success in Swat operation: Militancy almost wiped out*," Dawn, January 17, 2008. http://www.dawn.com/2008/01/17/top5.htm (accessed September 2, 2010).

[16]Paul Tighe and Khalid Qayyum, "*Pakistan Takes Control of Swat Valley From Militants (Update1)*," Bloomberg, http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aA70vtXdtXxU&refer=home (accessed August 14, 2010).

which were primarily unequal justice and misguided local grievances against the war on terror, the security approach continued small-scale tactical actions.[17] This turned public opinion against the military, rather than providing their much required support. Small incidents that provided indicators of militancy creeping back into the Valley were not fully analyzed and thus impaired the operational awareness of the imminent threat. This led to focusing on the wrong problem and misinterpretation of the environment. Failure to create the necessary security conditions led to the reemergence of militant groups. Meanwhile, trivial developmental projects and inconclusive engagement with the locals were considered adequate to provide the *coup de grâce* to destroy the insurgency.[18]

The militants consciously or unconsciously took advantage of the situation and reestablished their control over the populace using coercion and religious fervor.[19] Reinvigorated militancy took a heavy toll not only on the military but also on the lives of the local populace.[20] The Army lost support daily. This prompted a major internal review of where planning and execution had gone astray. Having learnt the hard way, the Pakistani Army reexamined the context, redrew their plans, and implemented an operational approach whereby the insurgency was defeated. The source of militants' strength, which gave them popularity with the locals, was identified and then offset by a new approach for gaining the trust of the populace, and separating them from the militant's cause.[21] Since these two phases in the Swat Valley showed both failure and success, they became learning and planning models for COIN. The defeat of the insurgency

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[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Raja Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur*," Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

[20]Muhammad Amir Rana, *Pakistan Security Report 2009* (Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, 2009), 6.

[21]Muhammad Amir Rana, Safdar Sial and Abdul Basit, *Dynamics of Taliban Insurgency in FATA* (Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, 2010), 6.

in Swat not only created the impetus but also shaped the conditions for launching COIN operations in the FATA.[22] The planning and execution of this operation were based on the COIN concepts derived from the lessons learned during the successful and unsuccessful stages of the Swat operation.

The experiences of Swat had operational level impact on the Pakistan's conceptual approach towards COIN. It was recognized that operational level concept of legitimacy as perceived by the external actors is not applicable for an internal force involved in COIN. The vastly diverse context within which both these actors operate gives a different meaning to the concept of legitimacy. This requires an operational approach that is more specific to the dynamics being faced by the internal actor.

The monograph begins with a review of relevant literature on the internal and external actors' perceptions on COIN. This is followed by explanation of the methodology used in developing and analyzing the case studies. The methodology chapter is followed by case studies of Operation Rah-e-Haq and Rah-e-Rast, and finally the monograph concludes by giving conclusions and recommendations in respect to the effect of context on the internal and external actors' perception on COIN.

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[22]Seth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2010), 72.

Literature Review

Existing literature on COIN by internal and external actors will be addressed in the literature review. This chapter will focus on operational level concepts of COIN as described in the doctrine and training material of United States (US) Army (external actor) and Pakistan Army (internal actor). It is noteworthy to mention here that the assumption in FM 3-24 is that COIN would include a significant deployment of U.S. forces. This key change makes this document different from its predecessors.[23] Moreover, the FM also distinguishes between "a mission to assist a functioning government" with those operations where no such viable entity exists or where a regime has been changed by conflict, noting that the last two situations add complex sovereignty and national reconstruction issues to an already complex mission.[24] This is an important notion which highlights the contextual difference within which both the actors operate. One is faced with a highly complex and intricate environment which involves multiple actors and entities, while the other is faced with fairly complex yet compositely simple environment.

The conceptual distinction about COIN takes its roots from the dissimilar meaning ascribed to insurgency by both the armies. In the US doctrine it is defined as:

> This is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict.[25]

In Pakistan Army insurgency is defined as:

> Insurgency is protracted political-military activity directed toward completely or partially controlling the resources of a country through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations.[26]

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[23]David H. Ucko, *The New Counterinsurgency Era: Transforming the U.S. Military for Modern Wars* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 109.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Headquarters Department of Army, *FM 3-24.2 Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2009), 1-1.

[26]Command and Staff College, *Analysis of Insurgency* (Quetta: Command and Staff College Printing Press, 2003), 5.

These two definitions of insurgency highlight the distinction with which both the actors view insurgencies. The resultant conceptual nuances which emerge in the approach for dealing with it are thus also fundamentally different. Whereas the former considers insurgencies as an existential threat to the constituted government, mostly of the host nation (HN), the latter considers it as an attempt to gain control of specific resources, mostly related to territory. The difference arises due to the perspective of both the actors. One is looking to safeguard the political structure of the state in which it has intervened, while the other is protecting its own territory and resources.

These definitions of insurgency, coupled with the varying perspective of counterinsurgents mostly driven by the different context in which they operate, leads to diverse conceptions about the insurgent strategies. From the US perspective six common insurgent strategies are urban, military-focused, protracted popular war, identity-focused, conspiratorial, and composite and coalition.[27] From Pakistan's point of view insurgency has four broad categories, military organized, politically organized, traditionally organized, and urban insurgency.[28] The external role in case of the former makes it especially sensitive to attempts to topple constituted government, as well as threats from a coalition of insurgents which may have grievances against the occupier.[29]

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[27]Headquarters Department of Army, *FM 3-24.2 Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2009), 2-16.

[28]Command and Staff College, *Analysis of Insurgency* (Quetta: Command and Staff College Printing Press, 2003), 9.

[29]Headquarters Department of Army, *FM 3-24.2 Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2009), 2-19.

The basic definition of COIN in both the nations' doctrine is the same i.e. those military, paramilitary, economic, psychological and civil actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency.[30] However, the US definition is further illustrated with the following:

> In a counterinsurgency, Host Nation forces and partners operate to defeat armed resistance, reduce passive opposition, and establish or reestablish the legitimacy of the Host Nation Government.[31]

Again, the focus is on preserving the legitimacy and existence of the HN in collaboration with partner nations. The text on COIN in the Pakistan doctrine is only restricted to defeating insurgencies with the nation's own resources to preserve the country's sovereignty. The main effort during COIN by an external actor is targeted to achieve legitimacy almost from the start for not only its own operations but also for the HN. Each line of effort represents a conceptual category along which the HN government and COIN force commander intend to attack the insurgent strategy and tactics and establish government's legitimacy.[32] The legitimacy which the external actor seeks for itself and the HN is not only bounded by the geographical boundaries of the AO but includes the international community as well. Every action of the external actor is viewed with a certain amount of skepticism to find legitimacy or illegitimacy in it. Therefore, the solution space which the external actor has to work with is very constricted and the restrictions imposed in order to gain legitimacy inhibit flexibility and freedom of action. Whereas, for the internal actor, legitimacy is internally focused on issues like provision of important services, buy in of people etc. COIN framework for Swat operation illustrates this point. The framework consisted of pillars comprising government armed forces, people, civilian administration, media, political establishment, and economic development. It was considered that these pillars would

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[30]Ibid., 3-1 and Command and Staff College, *Low Intensity Conflict* (Quetta: Command and Staff College Printing Press, 2003), 9.

[31]Headquarters Department of Army, *FM 3-24.2 Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2009), 3-1.

[32]Ibid., 3-7.

help stabilize and support the local environment and isolate the militants for their ultimate defeat. The priority for gaining legitimacy was first in the local environment followed by the national environment. Legitimacy for the external dimension comprising international/external players was placed at last.

COIN FRAMEWORK

EXTERNAL DIMENSIONS

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

ENEMY FORCE PEOPLE CIVIL ADMIN MEDIA POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT
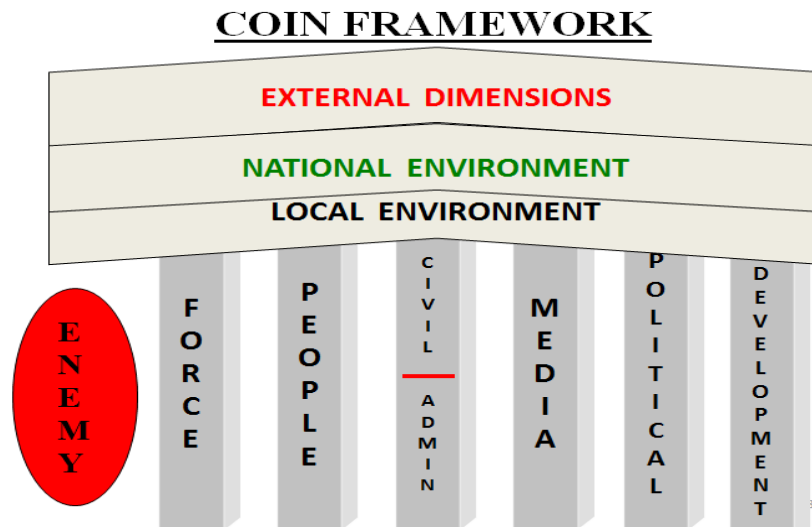
Figure 2 - COIN Framework for Swat Operation[33]

The international audience may sound their opinions on internal actor's actions, but would not be able to influence greatly as their legitimacy does not count for much in the equation. The Sri Lankan government's stance in COIN is a case in point:

> After a desperate effort had failed to influence India's Lok Sabha parliamentary
> elections in March-April 2009, the LTTE lobby heavily relied upon the
> diplomatic intervention of a number of Western countries to prevent its imminent
> defeat. Regardless of the immense international pressure against Sri Lanka to halt
> its final offensive, the political leadership did not relent and the military
> remained focused on eliminating the LTTE.[34]

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[33]Saqib, Ahmed, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.

[34]Sergei DeSilva Ranasinghe, "*Strategic Analysis of Sri Lankan Military's Counter-Insurgency Operations*," Future Directions International, http://www.futuredirections.org.au/admin/uploaded_pdf/1266992558-FDIStrategicAnalysisPaper-12February2010.pdf (accessed November 15, 2010).

Though COIN is inherently complex, whether done by an external or internal actor, the level of complexity varies for both.[35] For the external actor, the interdependent subsystems (actors) are much more than those for the internal force. HN government, HN security forces, regional and extra regional counties etc. are those additional actors which an external force has to be mindful of and include in the equation, thus making the environment more complex. For the internal COIN scenario, the government, security forces, and the majority of the populace are generally quite unified to act as a single actor. Internal actors cognizant of this fact may be able to change the system from being complex to just complicated.[36]

As the external actor has to deal with a host of complex issues while carrying out COIN in another country therefore it has to carry out an in-depth analysis of the environment in which it is operating. FM 3-24 identifies the eight operational variables which should be used to carry out this analysis.[37] These variables; political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment, and time indicate the handicap with which the external actor goes in to undertake COIN. Not only does it need to understand the insurgency but also the dynamics of the entire country and its key constituents. On the other hand, analytical framework for COIN by an internal actor is less complicated as it has the advantage of knowing the basic composition of the operating environment. However, factors like government objectives, nature of the affected area's society, nature of insurgency, nature of government, and response to the insurgency are critical for successful internal COIN.[38]

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[35]Yaneer Bar-Yam, *Making Things Work: Solving Complex Problems in a Complex World*, 1ST ed. (New York, NY: Knowledge Press, 2005), 99.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Headquarters Department of Army, *FM 3-24.2 Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2009), 1-3.

[38]Command and Staff College, *Analysis of Insurgency* (Quetta: Command and Staff College Printing Press, 2003), 33 and 34.

To achieve the desired end state of controlling and ultimately winning over the insurgency both the internal and the external actors have to consider a COIN framework which should guide their operational thought. For the internal actor this framework is internally focused and provides a checklist which is essential to carry out a successful COIN. Military factors like leadership, tactics and strategy, military intelligence, behavior and discipline of troops, civil-military relations, and the ability to raise popular militias are considered important.[39] On the non-military side; police operations, civilian intelligence, psychological operations, unified management of COIN, political framework, improvement of rural conditions and administration, and the ability to implement and administer legal reforms are considered complementary to the military effort.[40] For the external actor this framework has to be broad enough to raise the host nation from the nascent stage till it is capable of independent governance. Lines of effort given in FM 3-24 are a case in point.
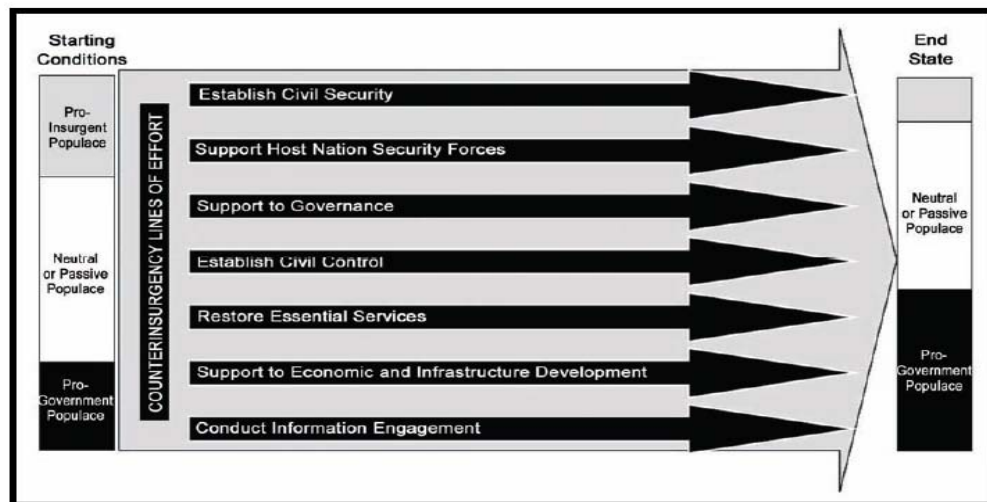

Figure 3 - COIN Lines of Effort[41]

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[39]Ibid., 35 and 36.

[40]Ibid., 36 and 37.

[41]Headquarters Department of Army, *FM 3-24.2 Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2009), 3-8.

An external actor, in order to establish and maintain synergy in its efforts for countering the insurgents, has to ensure unity of effort through the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) approach.[42] This unity of effort is extremely difficult to attain and then maintain due to different organizational or national caveats of all the participants. For the internal actor, unity of effort is not much of an issue as all the organizations are internal and their routine functioning, if being performed correctly, would be taking care of the COIN requirements. The most important factor which brings unity of effort for the internal actor is the imminent existential threat posed by the insurgency and the resultant realization to bring the desired unity to deal with it. Thus context again stands out as the key element that makes COIN at operational level different amongst both the actors.

A thorough understanding of the environment is extremely important before undertaking COIN. This understanding is extremely difficult to grasp based on only the cosmetic appearance of a society. For an external actor, who has to rely on these cosmetic details e.g. political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment, and time (PMESII-PT) to understand the environment, the depth of knowledge and understanding can be fairly superficial.[43] This by no means implies that the use of these operational variables have no value for the external actor. However, in comparison with an internal actor who has lived as part of that society, it does fall a bit short of the mark. The discussion on how well an internal actor does using his knowledge about the environment while undertaking COIN merits further discussion.

Politics within any country will always remain a contentious issue. The role of an external actor in support of governance by supporting transitional administration, development of local governance, anticorruption initiatives, and elections is likely to be marred with suspicion

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[42]Ibid., 3-2.

[43]Ibid., 1-3.

and controversy.[44] This role of the external actor makes it susceptible to public disapproval and gives the insurgents an added cause to muster local support in favor of their cause. Moreover, the conditions set by the external actor that fulfills legitimate governance, figure 5, are extremely rare to find in the established democracies, expecting them in an insurgency-torn country would be wishing for a bit too much.

Figure 4 - Legitimate governance FM 3-24[45]

The difference is an external actor intends on making the occupied country fit its paradigm of legitimacy while an internal actor needs to spread whatever form of legitimacy that exists in the rest of the country to the affected area.

History has proven that for an external actor the stability stage of COIN is most volatile; Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom are a case in point.[46] This is the stage where the sheer presence of the external force becomes its biggest enemy.[47] This tendency to prolong the stay infuriates local passion built on independent beliefs, cultural biases, religious

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[44]Ibid.,7-15

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid., 7-2.

[47]Ali Iqbal, "*Bismarck's Lesson On Coin: An Invading Force's Presence in a Foreign Land Is Its Own Enemy*," Small Wars Journal, http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/565-iqbal.pdf (accessed December 1, 2010).

differences, and historic events. This complex/non- linear environment poses tremendous challenges for an outsider to transform the HN and bring it to a desired level of stability. On the other hand the same environment presents lucrative opportunities for non-state and other state actors who intend to exploit the volatile situation to further their agendas and interests. However, for an internal force this is the phase where the maximum good will of the people can be gained. Being an internal force, the role is not considered that of an occupier and thus stability in the real sense can be brought to the affected area. Different context affects the notion of legitimacy for both the actors.

Therefore, the basic principles and TTPs (Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures) of conducting COIN have been generally the same for both, an internal force that operates within its borders or an external force operating in a foreign or occupied country. However, conceptually at the operational level both the internal and external actors' perception on COIN is vastly dissimilar due to the different context in which both of them operate.

Methodology

This section outlines the methodology used in proving the hypothesis that due to the different contexts in which both the internal and external actors operate, the key operational concept of legitimacy has different meaning and manifestation for both of them. Whereas the previous section presented the literature pertinent to the study and provided the basis for venturing into further research, this section will describe the selection and structure of case studies and the methodology in which the research was carried out.

While selecting the external actors, US stood out unanimously as the dominant external force in the contemporary period involved in COIN. Furthermore, FM 3-24 appeared to be the only document or doctrine that summarized the experiences and practices of COIN by external actors (US, UK, and France) from historical, as well as current operations.[48] Therefore, case studies of external actors was not considered prudent for the monograph as the FM provides a consolidated summary of operational level concepts and framework which has been based on the lessons and experiences of significant COIN campaigns. For the internal actors the following options were considered:

	Unsuccessful	Successful
Sri Lanka	COIN against Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from 1976 till 2008	COIN against LTTE from 2009 onwards
Pakistan	Swat – 1 (Operation Rah-e-Haq)	Swat – 2 (Operation Rah-e-Rast)

Table 1- Case Study Options – Internal Actor

The author's personal experience as Brigade Operations Officer in Swat as well as the close proximity and semblance of the operations to COIN in Afghanistan tilted the balance in

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[48]Headquarters Department of Army, *FM 3-24.2 Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2009), Preface viii.

favor of case studies pertaining to Pakistan. The comparison and contrast between Swat and the COIN paradigm on which FM 3-24 is based was considered to be more beneficial than the one conducted in Sri Lanka, as it is more closely related to the current fight against extremism. In addition, nuances in connotations of legitimacy based on different contextual settings and similar TTPs in COIN by both the internal and external actors are the two variables which were analyzed in this monograph.

The case studies have been structured in a manner that first establishes the background of the Swat insurgency. This portion of the paper covers the rise of terrorism in Pakistan in general and Swat in particular. The surfacing of various extremist organizations linked to initially the Soviet-Afghan war and then Operation Enduring Freedom is highlighted in this part. The section on case studies also establishes the political scenario in Pakistan that led to first of all the spread of extremism and then its counter action. By the end of this section, it is expected that the readers will have a basic understanding of the environment in which insurgency took birth in Swat and how the Pakistan government decided to act against it within a politically divided opinion.

After establishing the background the first phase of Swat COIN, Operation Rah-e-Haq, is discussed. This portion of the case study starts with the pre operation challenges which were faced by the military leadership before commencing the campaign including the execution of information operations to shape the environment. Thereafter, the militant threat before the commencement of the operations is given to lay out the correct perception of the challenges which the military faced at that time. This is followed by the pre operation analysis and conduct of the operation itself. The last portion of this section covers the involvement of the politicians and the first transition to peace talks in the COIN process and its resultant fallout which adversely affected the environment. Rah-e-Haq concludes with the analysis of the operation and the lessons learnt that formed the basis of learning for the phase II.

Details of Operation Rah-e-Rast are covered in the next portion. This starts with the environment which existed after the termination of Rah-e-Haq. The increasing influence of the

Taliban and the conditions which led to the second peace deal and imposition of Sharia are discussed in the part. The Taliban's excesses and the collapse of the deal, as well as conditions which led to the decision of launching a political/military campaign against the insurgency in Swat is also covered in this portion. This part concludes with details of the execution of Operation Rah-e-Rast which led to a comprehensive defeat of the Taliban. In the conclusion chapter the operational level concepts learned in Swat are compared and contrasted with the U.S. Army, FM 3-24 COIN doctrine to determine their key differences.

Case Studies-Swat Operation

Britain declared Swat a princely state in 1915 ruled by a "Wali (Keeper) of Swat." [49] As part of this autocratic rule, the British designated "Khans" (landlords) so that the Wali could govern through a few select people.[50] This type of local governance, though easy to execute, created a class system in Swat consisting of a few privileged rich landowners, Khans, and the majority of poor farmers and peasants. The Wali maintained this unequal social environment of "have and have nots" through stringent laws and a speedy judicial system. This era, though autocratic in nature, still took care of the welfare of the people and brought prosperity to the area. However, when Swat merged into Pakistan in 1971, it inherited the country's national laws and sluggish judicial system, which could not satisfy the local people.[51]

Faced with a judicial process riddled with corruption and procedural delays, the people of Swat believed that only Sharia (Islamic Law) would be able to address their legal concerns.[52] The demand of Nizam-e-Shariah (Imposition of Sharia) became a slogan of a religious organization called Tehreek-e-Nafaze Shariah Mohammadi (TNSM), led by the local cleric Sufi Muhammad.[53] This organization gained sufficient strength and public support, but turned violent in 1994. Consequently, the Frontier Corps (FC), a paramilitary establishment responsible for internal security in the northwest region of Pakistan, launched a military operation in 1994.[54] The operation controlled the volatile situation and the Provincial Government of the then NWFP,

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[49]Fredrik Barth, *The Last Wali of Swat* (Oslo: Columbia University Press, 1985), 7.

[50]Ibid,. 27.

[51]Rania Abouzeid, "*Taliban Gone, Pakistan Area Still Wants Islamic Justice,*"TIME, http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1984067,00.html (accessed August 15, 2010).

[52]Ibid.

[53]Masud Khan, *Military Operation in Swat* (Islamabad: Institute of Peace Studies, 2009), 2.

[54]Raja, Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur,*" Asian Tribune. http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

announced Nifaz-e-Shariah (Implementation of Sharia) Regulation in order to avoid future reoccurrences.[55]

To ensure that the regulation only pertained to the legal issues and did not cross over into the domain of governance and other related issues, the Nifaz-e-Shariah Regulation was revised in 1999 and was improved and enforced as the Sharia Nizam-e-Adal Regulation (Implementation of Religious Judicial Law) so as to restrict the issue of Sharia to the Judicial system only.[56] However, the local populace continued to find faults in the Sharia Nizam-e- Adl Regulation. Sufi Muhammad, the head of the TNSM, continued to struggle for the enforcement of all-out implementation of Sharia, but did not get the desired response from either the provincial or the federal government. In order to gain additional legitimacy and strengthen his cause as the champion of the religious movement, Sufi Muhammad mobilized people from Dir and took a Laskhar (local militia formed by tribesmen) to Afghanistan in 2001 to fight the Northern Alliance.[57] His venture resulted in a disaster, as most of the Lashkar was wiped out.

Sufi Muhammad, on his return was arrested and the TNSM organization was proscribed in 2002.[58] To fill in the vacuum, Malana Fazalullah, Sufi Muhammad's son-in-law became the head of the religious movement. Like his father-in-law, Fazalullah also utilized the slogan of Nifaz-e-Sharia at corner meetings, mosques, and radio broadcasts to mobilize support and emerge as a popular religious leader.[59] Using his popularity, he collected large donations, established a

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[55]Muhammad Amir Rana, "*Tehreek Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) Movement for the Enforcement of Islamic Sharia*," GlobalSecurity.Org, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/tnsm.htm (accessed August 19, 2010).

[56]Raja, Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur*," Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid.

madrassa (seminary) at Mam Derai (Fazalullah's hometown in Swat), and started giving fiery speeches in favor of Sharia on radio broadcasts.

Encouraged by his popularity and overwhelming domestic and foreign support, including support from the Taliban in the FATA, Fazalullah gradually became more militant.[60] He hijacked popular religious sentiments and demanded "Sharia Ya Shahadat" (Islamic law or Martyrdom). He and his radical followers committed violent acts against video/audio centers, barbershops, NGOs, female education, Polio vaccination and government functionaries.[61] Fazalullah and his radical followers were soon recognized as a potential ally by the Taliban in the FATA and asked him to join their organization as an additional chapter to be called, Tehreek-e-Taliban Swat (TTP-Swat) whose purpose was to implant an Islamic Emirate in the Swat Valley.[62]

The local Taliban, after being radicalized by their counterparts in the FATA, started spreading their influence in Swat.[63] Starting from the distant parts of the valley they evicted police from their stations and established their own police.[64] To display and exercise his authority, Fazalullah also evicted the civil administration and appointed his governors in the areas under his influence. The Swat Taliban killed and beheaded the local elite and Police/Frontier Constabulary. They displayed the severed heads on jeep hoods to intimidate the public and Government functionaries.[65] On gaining a foothold, Fazalullah announced Sharia in Swat and

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[60]Sami Yousufzai and Ron Moreau, "*Fazlullah, Widely Feared Mullah, Is Alive,*" Newsweek, http://www.newsweek.com/blogs/declassified/2010/07/23/fazlullah-widely-feared-mullah-is-alive.html (accessed August 19, 2010).

[61]Ibid.

[62]Mathias Gabaeur, "*In the Realm of Mullah Fazlullah*," SPIEGEL ONLINE International, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,518962,00.html (accessed August 19, 2010).

[63]Syed Shahzad, "*A new battle front opens in Pakistan*," Asia Times Online, July 14, 2007. http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/IG14Df04.html (accessed August 27, 2010).

[64]Bill Roggio, "*Pakistani government inks peace deal with Swat Taliban*," Long War Journal, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/05/pakistani_government.php (accessed August 25, 2010).

[65]Raja, Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur*," Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

started dispensing justice through his courts. To complement his efforts Mutahaida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), the political party in charge of the Provincial Government at that time, not only remained passive but provided tacit support due to its own radical principles.[66] The life and property of the Khans and other notables in Swat were threatened and the issue of "haves and have nots" intermingled with the demand for Sharia, further weakened the writ of the Pakistani government. The Lal Masjid incident of 2007, in which a religious seminary comprising of students mostly from Swat, was closed down through a military operation due to its radical activities, was fully exploited by Fazalullah to fuel the already volatile situation which further deteriorated law and order in Swat.[67] Consequently, most of Swat, outside of Mingora (the capital of Swat) became a "No Go Area" for the law enforcing agencies (LEAs). To control the worsening situation, the federal government imposed a state of "Emergency."[68]

Under the provisions of the constitution the Army was deployed in Swat without the consent of the provincial government.[69] At that time, the militant threat was considered a fairly manageable one which would not require intense military operations. Two brigade groups were deployed in both Swat and its neighboring district of Dir.[70] The Area of operations (AO) is attached as Appendix 4. The following was the mandate for the force:

1. Deploy as soon as possible and create effects by presence.
2. Integrate the efforts of all civilians and military intelligence agencies to monitor Taliban activities in the area.
3. If required, be prepared to dominate the area by show of force.

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[66]Ibid

[67]Aryan Baker, "*Storming the Red Mosque*," TIME, http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1641630,00.html (accessed August 22, 2010)

[68]Alan Kronstadt, *Pakistan's Political Crisis* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2008), 7-8.

[69]Jane Parlez and Ismael Khan, "*Militants Gain Despite Decree by Musharraf*," New York Times, November 16, 2007. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/16/world/asia/16swat.html?_r=2&oref=slogin (accessed August 26, 2010).

[70]Seth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2010), 69.

4. Provide strength to the LEAs and enhance confidence of the law-abiding citizens.
5. Be prepared establish effective control on the movement of Taliban, when ordered.
6. Be prepared to launch operations on short notice, when ordered.[71]

The federal government's decision to send the army to Swat met vehement opposition from the provincial government. The provincial government refused requisitions from the military and withheld all provincial support i.e. bureaucratic assistance by the provincial government functionaries, and the utilization of government infrastructure by the military. The military, in spite of this inter-governmental friction, deployed in July 2007 and was concentrated in the three main towns of Swat, including the capital, Mingora.[72] The provincial government continued to contest the military's employment from July to October 2007. In October due to the upcoming elections the provincial government was dissolved and an interim setup nominated by the federal government took control of the establishment in NWFP that was inclined to control the insurgency using all available means.[73] Meanwhile, militancy continued to rise, but was not yet considered a formidable threat.

Ultimately, the federal government decided that the military would be held in reserve and active operations be conducted by the FC. A FC operation to unhinge militant strongholds in Khawazakhela and Manglaur met with disaster. The FC suffered serious causalities at both strongholds due to an erroneous concept of the Threat. The resistance displayed by the militants came as a rude awakening for all concerned quarters of the government.[74] As a consequence of

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[71]Ibid.

[72]Bill Roggio, "*Taliban, military clash in South Waziristan, Swat,*" The Long War Journal, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/01/taliban_military_cla.php (accessed August 20, 2010).

[73]Alan Kronstadt, *Pakistan's Scheduled 2008 Election: Background* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2008), 3.

[74]Bill Roggio, "*Pakistani government inks peace deal with Swat Taliban,*" Long War Journal, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/05/pakistani_government.php (accessed August 25, 2010).

the setback, command of the operations was taken away from FC and given to the Army in November 2007.[75]

In spite of being in the Area of Operation (AO) during the previous three months, the army's movement and activities were restricted by the political situation. The Brigade Group in Swat lost 15 soldiers during this deployment without conducting any active operations. A large number of soldiers had also received serious injuries from Vehicle Borne and Static Improved Explosive Devices.[76] Additionally, the populace had become wary of the commitment of the Army since they had not witnessed any active operations since its arrival.[77] Fazalullah and TTP-Swat, having killed the army's personnel and repulsed the FC's attack, had a great deal of self-confidence and tacit support, often through coercion of the locals.[78] Fazalullah also hijacked the local sentiment by continuously repeating that the army had come on the behest of the 'nobles' to deny the basic rights to the 'commoners' of Swat, as well as prevent Islamic law from being introduced to alleviate their problems. However, the army was focused on defeating the militancy and creating conditions for the necessary follow-up by the political establishment.

The realization of the repercussions of Swat falling into the hands of the militants had nationwide effects. All of Pakistan voiced their concerns about the militants' activities. However, a small percentage of people, especially those belonging to the NWFP, showed their sympathies

[75]AFP, "*Army Operation In Swat,*" Pakistan Defense, November 12, 2007. http://www.defence.pk/forums/pakistans-war/8202-army-operation-swat.html (accessed August 21, 2010).

[76]Correspondent, "*Pakistan army retakes Swat towns,*" BBC NEWS, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7130682.stm (accessed August 26, 2010).

[77]Chris Morris, "*Pakistan army retakes key peak,*" BBC NEWS, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7114543.stm (accessed August 26, 2010).

[78]New York Times, "*Maulana Fazlullah,*" New York Times, July, 2009. http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/f/maulana_fazlullah/index.html (accessed August 29, 2010).

with Fazalullah with the question, 'Is asking for the enforcement of Sharia Law too much?'[79] The

army launched operation "Rah-e-Haq" ["The Right Path"] during this turmoil.[80]

Operation Rah-e-Haq (Swat -1)

Before commencing the operation against an active and extremely confident enemy the

military faced a number of challenges. The first challenge was to raise the morale of troops who

were restrained by the political process and during this period of inactivity had seen their

comrades die at the hands of militants.[81] This challenge was addressed through frequent

interaction and motivational discourses of military's leadership which motivated the soldiers to

stay focused on the task at hand.[82] The leadership also played an instrumental role addressing the

second challenge, creating conviction for the cause. The issue of Fazalullah only asking for

implementation of Sharia and nothing else was recognized as a farce and a façade to attain his

hidden agenda of establishing a parallel writ to challenge the government. This stance of

Fazalullah and the negative environment created by the TTP-Swat was articulately put across to

the troops and their conviction in the cause grew. The third and the most sensitive of all

challenges was to prepare troops to fight fellow citizens and within Pakistan's communities.

Swat, unlike FATA, was famous for its peace-loving people who lived a moderate life.[83] Fighting

a few extremist minded people amongst 1.6 million, peace-loving citizens of Swat within their

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[79]Raja, Asif Haroon,"*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur*," Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

[80]Amin Ahmed, "*Army claims success in Swat operation: Militancy almost wiped out*," Dawn, January 17, 2008. http://www.dawn.com/2008/01/17/top5.htm (accessed September 2, 2010).

[81]Bill Roggio, "*Pakistani government inks peace deal with Swat Taliban*," Long War Journal, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/05/pakistani_government.php (accessed August 25, 2010).

[82]Kalsoom, "*The Battle Continues as Gen. Kayani Visits Posts in Swat*," Changing Up Pakistan, http://changinguppakistan.wordpress.com/2008/01/24/the-battle-continues-as-gen-kayani-visits-posts-in-swat/ (accessed September 4, 2010).

[83]Noor Haq, *THE OPERATION RAH-E-RAST* (Islamabad: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2009), 1.

own country was a real challenge. This challenge was dealt with first through interaction and

discussion and was further alleviated through an information operation (IO) campaign whose

theme was based on these two verses of the Holy Quran :

> "So remind them (Muhammad), you are only a one who reminds. You are not a
> dictator over them."

Surah Alghashia, Verse 2

> "Your duty is only to convey (the message) and on Us is the reckoning."

Surah Al Raad, Verse 40

This theme was very successful in communicating to the troops and the locals of Swat

that the religion being propagated by Fazalullah and his followers is not in line with how God

ordained it to be. The corner stone of the IO campaign was, if the Prophet (Peace Be upon Him)

was restricted to the role of reminding and conveying the religion only then what justification did

these extremist have to spread the religion by use of violence and coercion. It was further

emphasized that these groups have dogmatic and radicalized beliefs that are not only infringing

upon the domain of God but are also degrading the image of Islam which is supposed to be the

symbol of peace. It was also articulated that by enforcing their interpretation of Islam these

miscreants want to change the way of life that is so dear to our nationals.[84] Therefore, resistance

to them and their ideology falls in the purview of national establishments entrusted with the duty

of protecting the nation.

This theme was extremely useful and after its implementation a marked improvement

was seen in the morale and the conviction of the troops who now felt an obligation to fight and

remove this menace from Swat.[85] Having shaped the morale of the troops and having galvanized

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[84]Zahoor Khan, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.

[85]Ibid.

strong sentiments against the militants the actual conduct of military operations seemed the next logical step.

All available intelligence reports suggested that hardcore militants from Fazalullah and approximately 500 foreign fighters from Afghanistan and other tribal areas would form the frontline of militants opposing Army operations.[86] The strength of hardcore elements was expected to increase with the arrival of Taliban from other areas, especially Bajaur, Dir and Waziristan.[87] In addition, foreign reinforcements, made up of mostly Uzbeks and Chechens, were also confirmed in the area.[88] The satellite imagery showing the main areas under militant control in November 2007 is attached as Appendix 5. It was realized that the Taliban of FATA would consider Swat as an extension of their influence and assist Fazalullah, as defeat in Swat would mean a defeat to their ideology. This assumption proved accurate once information of experienced Taliban commanders entering the valley to assume the command and control of the local fighters started emanating from local sources and intelligence agencies.[89] However, there were also indications that Fazalullah and TTP-Swat were extremely wary of the impending military operations and though they had successfully defeated the FC and the other local LEA's taking on the Army would not be an easy task.

To effectively exercise both the local Taliban administration duties and impending operations Fazalullah organized the militants in local command areas and designated his most

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[86]Junaid Khan, "*Pakistani troops secure northwest hills from rebels*," Reuters Foundation, November 27, 2007. http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/ISL146080.htm (accessed August 26, 2010).

[87]Inter Services Public Relations, "*Taliban's Arms Coming from Afghanistan*," Pak Tribune, May 30, 2009. http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?215418 (accessed September 5, 2010).

[88]Michael Heath and Khalid Qayyum, "*Pakistan Says Uzbek, Chechen Fighters Aiding Taliban in Swat*," Bloomberg, http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=a_Dh7ZyHByps&refer=home (accessed September 2, 2010).

[89]Correspondent, "*Pakistan army retakes Swat towns*," BBC NEWS, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7130682.stm (accessed August 26, 2010).

trusted and locally dominant allies as the commanders.[90] The task of these sub unit commanders included collecting forced donations, kidnapping for ransom, recruiting and training new Taliban and organizing law and order, including the judicial apparatus in their areas of responsibility.[91] However, Fazalullah and his organization had yet to prove themselves against the operations of the army.

Before the commencement of major military operations the army conducted a thorough analysis of the terrain and the local prevailing environment. Through the analysis of the terrain, military planners concluded that the narrow valleys and thick vegetation would severely restrict movement, as well as, pose limitations on observations and fields of fire.[92] This constricted terrain conversely would be of great advantage to the militants for conducting roadside ambushes and cross-country movement to improve their mobility. Apart from the constriction of the terrain the movement within the AO was only restricted to a few and well distinguished roads and trails. These limited communication arteries apart from reducing the movement options posed as lucrative targets for the militants to lay IEDs and detect early movement of military convoys.[93] Cross-country movement by military vehicles was next to impossible due to the nature of the thickly-vegetated and watercourse-riddled terrain. This terrain amplified the importance of the existing roads and the protection of bridges and culverts, whose destruction would severely impede operations. The thick vegetation, especially in summer, limited the use of combat aviation. Most of the area especially in the north and northwest impeded easy access due to lack

[90]Rahimullah Yousufzai, "*PAK TALIBAN COMMANDERS*," Raman's Pashtun Belt Database, http://ramanspashtunbeltdatabase.blogspot.com/2009/05/pak-taliban-commanders.html (accessed September 1, 2010).

[91] Raja, Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur*," Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

[92]Zahoor Khan, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.

[93]Ibid.

of adequate communication infrastructure and existence of high mountains.[94] However, the

presence of trails within those mountain ranges made inter-valley movement and movement from

adjoining areas to Swat an easy option for the militants.[95] The high ridges and mountains along

which the roads passed would also give an added advantage to the militants for observing the

movement and activities of the military. Large population centers exist within this constricted

terrain, especially near the communication arteries, which not only posed difficulty in movement

but also increased the chances of urban combat.

Another major drawback posed by the area's demography was the lack of a tribal system,

which had disintegrated due to the migration of the populace to urban centers. This resulted in a

lack of collective responsibility and accountability, which was unusual for a society in this part of

the country.[96] Additionally, the religious faith of the locals provided support to the militants and

furthered their agendas.[97] The militants used incidents like the Lal Masjid Operation and

Pakistan's role in the war against terror to incite hatred against the establishment and the

LEA's.[98]

The operational planning was conventional in form with the physical defeat of militants

as the top priority.[99] The first step would be the domination of critical spaces so that the militants'

freedom of movement could be curtailed. This was to be followed by clearing areas from the

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[94]Ibid.

[95]Ibid.

[96]Imran, "*Culture and Institutions*," Swatian.com, http://www.swatian.com/history/culture.html (accessed September 3, 2010).

[97]Mathias Gabaeur, "*In the Realm of Mullah Fazlullah*," SPIEGEL ONLINE International, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,518962,00.html (accessed August 19, 2010).

[98]Syed Raza, "*Revenge attacks in Swat for Lal Masjid: cleric*," Dawn, May 4, 2009. http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/13+situation+in+tribal+areas+linked+to+lal+masjid+operation--za-01 (accessed August 21, 2010).

[99]Saqib Ahmed, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.

southern portion of the valley and moving north in village-by-village clearance and security operations. After clearing an area, the locals would then be used to secure the area and restore the administrative apparatus. Locally-controlled checkpoints would control the movement of militants and affiliated groups. Social development to win hearts and minds would then follow to consolidate and totally alienate the militants from the locals. With this concept at the fore, Operation Rah-e-Haq began military operations. Conduct of operations is attached as Appendix 6.

The operation kicked off on November 25, 2007 and moved quickly from the southern part of the valley towards the north.[100] This southern effort was complemented by another brigade operation that operated on the east-west axis in the northern portion of the Valley. This forced the militants to fight in several directions. They holed up in the mountains, could not deal with the envelopment and started to collapse under this pincer movement. The speed of the operation and the failure of the militants to mount a strong defense could also be attributed to the fact that both the sides were fighting on mountains and locations away from the urban areas. A conventional force fighting an unconventional force in an environment suiting the former made the difference. The formal resistance and the will of the militants collapsed in the first week of December.[101]

Intelligence intercepts disclosed that militant commanders had ordered their units to stop fighting and escape Swat or merge with the population.[102] By this time, the local support had

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[100]Paul Tighe and Khalid Qayyum, "*Pakistan Takes Control of Swat Valley From Militants (Update1)*," Bloomberg, http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aA70vtXdtXxU&refer=home (accessed August 14, 2010).

[101]Amin Ahmed, "*Army claims success in Swat operation: Militancy almost wiped out*," Dawn, January 17, 2008. http://www.dawn.com/2008/01/17/top5.htm (accessed September 2, 2010).

[102]Sami Yousufzai and Ron Moreau, "*Fazlullah, Widely Feared Mullah, Is Alive*," Newsweek, http://www.newsweek.com/blogs/declassified/2010/07/23/fazlullah-widely-feared-mullah-is-alive.html (accessed August 19, 2010).

shifted to the military and they generously welcomed them in whatever area they operated.[103]

Public support of the militants started to fade. From the end of December onwards, military

operations hardly faced any resistance due to the collapse of the militants' organization. The

army cleared and held the planned key locations. By February 2008, all the key areas were under

the occupation of the army, save Piochar, a mountainous location in the Northwest of the Valley.

This area would assume considerable significance. The reasons at that time for not extending to

Piochar were a lack of sufficient troops to hold that area, and indicators that the militants were no

longer a coherent organization capable of resurgence. The quick success based on conventional

military approach gave a false impression that COIN principles practiced by contemporary

counterinsurgents in other countries were equally applicable to internal actors battling own

insurgencies.

The similarities between French COIN in Algeria and the situation then in Swat had

amazing parallels which are best described in the words of a French General, following a military

operation against the insurgents:

> "The strong rebel zones of Beni Merai-Barbor and Arbaoun-Tamessuida have
> been seriously dismantled. The rebel elements have either retreated in to
> surrounding sanctuaries or have been broken down into small groups that avoid
> contact. The rebel political organization, lacking the support to the military
> apparatus, is partly neutralized and its members are hiding. The logistical
> infrastructure is deeply disorganized. The population has been freed to a certain
> extent from the rebel constraint and has begun a clear move back toward our
> side….The population's shift is, however, not irreversible; to maintain and
> accelerate it, we must pursue simultaneously and at every level the destruction of
> the bands."[104]

Thereafter, the army conducted a number of cordon and search operations of major towns

and villages to clear the area of militants and establish an elaborate network of check posts

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[103]BBC Correspondent, "*Pakistan army retakes Swat towns*," BBC NEWS, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7130682.stm (accessed August 26, 2010).

[104]Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 114.

throughout the Valley.[105] Though the successful culmination of large scale military operations had broken the back of TTP-Swat yet ironically not a single significant leader including Fazalullah was either caught or killed with most of them escaping to the neighboring districts or the FATA.[106] This survival of the militant command and control would prove a problem in Swat. Further, militant casualties were low with 290 killed and 143 arrested.[107] After the first month of the operation, the militants did not fight the army and either merged back in the population or escaped. With temporary stability returning to Swat, the army moved onto key terrain and remained outside the population centers in their well-entrenched camps, a significant and repetitive error in the history of COIN.[108] Most of the army's deployment, rather than focusing on the population centers, were on mountains and elevated areas providing a good conventional defense. Engagement with the locals commenced with the end of large-scale active operations.[109] However, as the forces were deployed away from the communication centers, it was restricted to either the affluent group or the local administration functionaries who had been previously deposed by the Taliban.

This engagement, in hindsight, was only serving a small minority. The military also launched a campaign to win the "Hearts and Minds." The Army established free medical camps, the distribution of relief goods, and quick impact projects worth 1000 million Pakistani Rupees.

[105]Iqbal Khattak, "*Army hands over Swat checkposts to civilian administration*," Daily Times, June 24, 2010. http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010story_24-6-2010_pg7_9 (accessed September 5, 2010)

[106]Bilal Iftikhar, "*How Did Pakistan Militant Fazalullah Escape to Afghanistan?*" Ground Report, http://www.groundreport.com/Opinion/Fazalullah-in-Afghanistan-Questions-which-need-Ans/2912014 (accessed September 6, 2010).

[107]BBC Correspondent, "*Pakistan hunting Swat militants*," BBC NEWS, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7134089.stm (accessed August 26, 2010).

[108]Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*: A French View of Counterinsurgency (PSI Classics of the Counterinsurgency Era) (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2006), 80.

[109]Gohar Ali, "*Malakand jirga seeks end to bloodshed in Bajaur, Swat*," Dawn, August 18, 2008. http://www.dawn.com/2008/08/18/local5.htm (accessed August 25, 2010)

The army also broadcast progressive and moderate messages on FM radio stations in Swat with a view to de-radicalize the populace.[110] Commencing operations in November 2007, the Army had secured 95 percent of Swat and reversed the situation in favor of the LEA's by February 2008. Grounds for the conduct of general elections were established and life was restored to normalcy in almost the entire valley.[111]

The elections of 2008 to the relief of all brought an extremely moderate Awami National Party (ANP) in power not only Swat but also the entire Province.[112] The party was primarily elected due to the frustrations and disappointment of the people in the previous religiously-inclined government of MMA. ANP, after coming in power, realized that the military had created an environment to facilitate the political process and without any groundwork immediately transitioned to peace talks with the militant leadership who were in the hiding.[113] What the newly elected government did not realize was that in order to bring this revolutionary change in the region the inclusion of radicals within the government would only weaken their role and threaten a takeover by the hardliners, a frequently proven phenomenon in COIN.[114] With the commencement of the peace talks all military activities were put on hold in order to show the sincerity of the government in bringing long-term stability. Excerpts from the peace deal include:

1. Sharia law would be imposed in the Swat and Malakand districts.
2. The Army will gradually withdraw security forces from the region.
3. The government and the Taliban would exchange prisoners.
4. The Taliban would recognize the writ of the government and cooperate with security forces.
5. The Taliban would halt attacks on barber and music shops.

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[110]Zahoor Khan, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.

[111]Ibid.

[112]Raja, Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur*," Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

[113]Ibid.

[114]Misagh Parsa, *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

6. The Taliban cannot display weapons in public.
7. The Taliban would turn in heavy weapons (rockets, mortars).
8. The Taliban cannot operate training camps.
9. The Taliban would denounce suicide attacks.
10. A ban would be placed on raising private militias.
11. The Taliban will cooperate with the government to vaccinate children against diseases like polio.
12. Fazlullah's madrassa, the Imam Dherai, would be turned into an Islamic university.
13. Only licensed FM radio stations would be allowed to operate in the region.
14. The Taliban would allow women to "perform their duties at the work place without any fear."[115]

Although the peace agreement raised very high expectations it soon proved to only be political rhetoric of the new political government. The agreement was not well thought out and lacked requisite road map for implementation. The points agreed between the government members and the Taliban were vague and ambiguous so their enforcement became a problem.[116] The Taliban were not looking for peace but rather a breather in which they could reorganize and resurface; an approach with striking similarities to the Maoist insurgency in Nepal.[117] The peace agreement lasted for approximately two months in which the Army was constrained to their bases and a number of captured militants released.[118] This provided an opportunity to the escaped Taliban and their leadership to resurface. In clear violation of the peace agreement militant training camps started functioning in full swing especially in Piochar and other far-flung areas.[119]

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[115]Bill Roggio, "*Pakistani government inks peace deal with Swat Taliban*," Long War Journal, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/05/pakistani_government.php (accessed August 25, 2010).

[116]Raja, Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur*," Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

[117]Thomas A. Marks, *Insurgency in Nepal* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute United States Army War College, 2003), 7.

[118]Bill Roggio, "*Pakistan's Swat peace agreement in the crossfire*," The Long War Journal, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/06/pakistans_swat_peace.php (accessed September 4, 2010).

[119]Raja, Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur*," Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

A fragmented sovereignty began to emerge in Swat.[120] To make best use of the situation, the

Taliban in FATA saw this as an opportunity to strengthen their counterparts in a manner which

would ensure their longevity.[121] Militarily the breather provided was lost due to a non-pragmatic

political follow up and an appeasing "live and let live" peace agreement. In short the politicians

failed to capitalize the gains of the Army, as the arrangement between the military and politics

did not follow the course as described in the eloquent words of Von Moltke:

> "[I]n no case must the military leader allow his operations to be influenced by
> politics alone; quite the contrary, he must keep his eye on the military success,"
> because " it is of no concern to [that leader] how politics can subsequently use
> his victories or defeats; it is up to the politics to exploit them."[122]

The level of understanding required from both the political leadership and the Army to

deal with the resurfacing insurgency proved inadequate. The stability attained was lost on account

of six critical grounds.

First was loss of public support; the people who had sided with the LEA's in flushing out

the Taliban found themselves at the mercy of returning militants.[123] This affected their faith in

the army and the government, because they were again under duress from the Taliban. The

loyalties of the civilians in the operational area, vital for any insurgents, slowly started turning

towards the Taliban.[124]

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[120]Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 89.

[121]Inter Services Public Relations, "*Taliban's Arms Coming from Afghanistan*," Pak Tribune, May 30, 2009. http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?215418 (accessed September 5, 2010).

[122]Everett Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Policy in the Space and Information Age*, New Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 20.

[123]Raja, Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur,*" Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

[124]Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 92.

Second, the affluent people and the political leaders again felt threatened and most of them left the area. The politicians who had inked the peace agreement started badmouthing the LEA's and a blame game for apportioning the responsibility for the instability started between the two. In the absence of political leadership, the army was left with the additional burden of public management at which it was both inexperienced and ill organized.

Third, the Taliban and their leadership reemerged. Due to the long negotiations, restraint by the army and appeasing peace agreement, the Taliban returned better equipped, organized, in larger numbers, and with improved resolve and desire for vengeance.[125] The army had to fight and clear all key areas again, as the concept of clear, hold, and build was not exercised previously.

Fourth, the Taliban adapted to the army's techniques and tactics; having faced defeat in the first round and gaining the requisite time to understand the tactics, techniques, and procedures of the Army, the militants reorganized their operating procedures. Rather than fighting in the open and desolate terrain, they started operating within the population hubs and were able to seize and retain the initiative.[126] The militants also came to realize the importance of the restricted mountainous line of communications and through a well-planned and executed disruption plan started destroying some of the key bridges and culverts thereby denying their use to the Army convoys.[127]

Fifth, the forces all over Swat were overextended. Having forces deployed in almost all of Swat the Army suffered from being spread too thin. Outposts of 40-50 personnel widely-spread apart were isolated and stretched to the limit. Not only were the outposts extremely

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[125]Raja, Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur,*" Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

[126]Ibid.

[127]Associated Press, "*Bridge blown up in Swat,*" Daily Times, March 27, 2008. http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\03\27\story_27-3-2008_pg7_7 (accessed August 21, 2010).

vulnerable to the increasing attacks of the militants, but resupplying and replenishing them also became an issue due to frequent attacks and the disruption of line of communications. The staggering requirement for establishing and preserving control over the entire territory cleared from the militants was exasperating, as was found in Mozambique and Ireland insurgencies.[128]

Sixth, the army failed to adjust to the changing environment. The militants, having learnt the lessons from the past, adapted in a more effective manner. The cumulative effect of the governance and leadership vacuum combined with the fears of safety by the locals reversed the situation in favor of Fazalullah.[129]

The Taliban, having exploited the opportunity provided by the peace agreement, began to cement their position in Swat. Their strategy focused on the governance and leadership vacuum in the Valley and they again started issuing parallel orders in order to undermine and further isolate the people from the government.[130] They intensified the killing and intimidation of local influential leaders, pitting the disenfranchised against the Khans and exploiting the issue of "haves and have nots."[131] Apart from targeting the LEAs, the militants started inflicting damage to vital government utilities and installations to add to the frustration of the local population. Destruction of electric grid stations, natural gas supply lines, and water distribution plants became a common practice. They also deliberately targeted personnel and family members of the police and the FC to trigger large scale desertion and resignations; a technique which proved to be quite

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[128]Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 139.

[129]Saqib, Ahmed, Operation Rah-e-Haq, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.

[130]Raja, Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur*," Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

[131]Zubair Torwali, "*What next after military operation in Swat?*" Express Tribune, May 14, 2010. http://tribune.com.pk/story/13049/what-next-after-military-operation-in-swat/ (accessed August 21, 2010).

successful.[132] Not only did the effectiveness of the police diminish the manning level of Police Stations fell incredibly to low levels. This was timed with extortion, looting, arson, kidnap, and ransom collecting activities by the Taliban to add to the general insecurity of the public.

Using an elaborate disruption plan, the militants took out a number of key bridges and culverts that not only affected military convoys, but also the local farmers and traders whose goods could not be brought to the market or down country on these roads. This made a miserable situation worse and increased the frustration of the locals who could not even earn their livelihood to sustain their families. In order to damage the image of the army and reduce their credibility, militants destroyed soft targets, such as schools within population centers.[133] The Army, overstretched and deployed away from the towns could only manage piecemeal reactive actions. After raising the frustration level of the locals Fazalullah and his commanders organized processions against the government and Army lead by the locals criticizing the inefficiency of the former and demanding the withdrawal of the latter. This simultaneity in the militant actions further inhibited Army's efficacy which found itself distracted in trying to pacify the locals and police the major towns. The militants also established their mobile sharia courts in most parts of the Valley and promised instant justice to the locals.[134] This facet, one of the key demand of the locals from the government brought the militants tremendous popularity; a root cause which the government had identified but failed to address.

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[132]Ayesha Nasir, "*In Pakistan, Swat Valley police give up in face of Taliban attacks*," Christian Science Monitor, February 5, 2009. http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2009/0205/p07s02-wosc.html (accessed September 6, 2010).

[133]Indian Press Correspondent, "*Taliban torched over 200 schools in Swat in 2 years*," Indian Express, May 24, 2009. http://www.indianexpress.com/news/taliban-torched-over-200-schools-in-swat-in-2-yrs-report/465093/ (accessed September 4, 2010).

[134]Bill Roggio, "*Swat Taliban summon government officials to sharia courts*," The Long War Journal, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/01/swat_taliban_summon.php (accessed September 3, 2010).

Militant's FM radio propaganda broadcasts disrupted during the initial state of the operation remerged and the Taliban through coercion and incentives started influencing the local media of Swat.[135] Newspapers started publishing maligning stories against the LEAs and government while portraying the evenhandedness and welfare which the Taliban promised to bring for the people. In order to effectively influence the populace and inhibit the Army's actions, the most important transition which the militants made was moving from their mountain hideouts into the urban centers.[136] They recognized the inherent weakness which regular forces faced while operating within urban areas and they intended to exploit it to the maximum.

Due to these Taliban activities, the people started questioning the motives and sincerity of the government and the LEAs in fighting the militants.[137] Their perception was reinforced because none of the significant militant leaders were either killed or captured including Fazalullah. Even the seminary of Fazalullah which was under control of the LEAs had not been destroyed.[138] Opinions started surfacing that the insurgency was being regulated by the intelligence agencies on behalf of the US and that the new ANP government and the Taliban supported one another which resulted in the peace agreement and release of Taliban prisoners.[139]

The perception extended to the Army. It was not effective in targeting the Taliban but had made the life of ordinary citizens extremely difficult with the imposition of frequent curfews, establishing of check posts, and collateral damage while fighting with the Taliban. Public

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[135]Zafar Iqbal, "*Media besieged by Taliban in Swat*," Swatvalley.org, http://swatvalley.org/index.php/Articles/media-besieged-by-taliban-in-swat?blog=1 (accessed September 1, 2010).

[136]Asif Haroon, "*Obtaining Situation in Swat and Bajaur*," Asian Tribune, http://www.asiantribune.com/node/16028 (accessed August 23, 2010).

[137]Umar Farooq, "*Cover: Operation Image Restoration*," Herald, http://www.dawn.com/herald/may10.htm#1 (accessed September 1, 2010).

[138]Dawn Correspondent, "*Forces recapture Fazlullah's HQ*," Dawn, April 10, 2008. http://www.dawn.com/2008/04/11/local9.htm (accessed August 17, 2010)

[139]Bill Roggio,"*Pakistan's Swat peace agreement in the crossfire*," The Long War Journal, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/06/pakistans_swat_peace.php (accessed September 4, 2010).

frustration due to the destruction of electricity plants, water, gas, and communication infrastructure, coupled with the resultant price hike of basic essential commodities added to the grief of the people and made them indifferent to the government and the LEAs. The Army became overextended, shorthanded, and was unable to cope with the militant's activity. The police were understrength and ineffective. Public utility installations were unsecure. The government was ineffective and socio-economic development was at a standstill. The desired end state was far from being achieved.

The COIN framework shown in figure 2 displayed a dismal picture of the operational environment. The force pillar, due to the paralysis of the LEAs, had weakened which resulted in the people pillar giving in to the militants. The civilian administration's absence, coerced media's negative role, politicians' lack of vision resulting in the impotent peace talks, and lack of comprehensive development programs weakened the rest of the pillars supporting the local environment. The weakening of the local environment had national and international reverberations. At the national level the government began to feel the effects of the insurgency while in the international arena the rest of the world began doubting Pakistan's capability in dealing with the militants. The enemy, rather than being sidelined, began to dominate the environment. Figure 5 shows how the framework of Rah-e-Haq was affected.
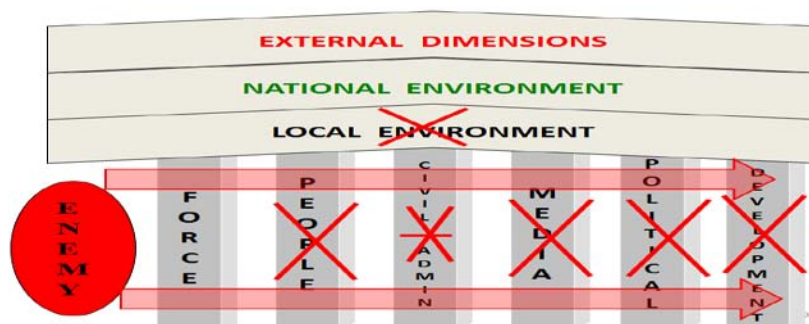
Figure 5 - COIN Framework[140]

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[140]Saqib Ahmed, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.

The expanding influence of militants in Swat and inability of the government and its LEAs to respond to the threat indicated that the COIN approach lacked the adaptability and vision necessary to achieve success. Continuance of the current approach would seriously jeopardize any chances of defeating the insurgency which if it succeeded could create serious repercussions for the rest of the country. A pause for introspection was felt necessary to map the future course of action which would be decisive for the writ of the state to be established in Swat. This realization prompted an in-depth analysis based on the lessons learnt from Operation Rah-e-Haq. The scope of the analysis had to be expanded to include all elements of national power with special attention on the role of the armed forces. The purpose of the analysis and lessons learnt, written below, was to serve as the guiding principles for the next phase of operations:

1. The operational approach of Rah-e-Haq seemed to follow the model which an external actor would use to fight COIN. *The environment in Swat dictates that our role in COIN has to be defined as per the context in which we are operating. We are not a foreign force fighting another nation's insurgents and thus our approach and thinking should conform to suit our social and environmental structure.*

2. Governance issues are best tackled through improved governance and not by use of force. The Army's employment to redress governance failure appears to be an easy solution, but is it conceptually correct? *Exploitable agendas and issues with a potential to grow into low intensity conflict cannot be pushed under the carpet but addressed squarely through good governance and in good time to take the wind out of the storm.*

3. Absence of singleness of conception between federal and provincial government created an unfavourable and non-supportive environment for Army's employment. Operations were conducted during a political upheaval and period of interim government and emergency. Later, it fell victim to even deeper political confusion. The fissure at national level denied exploitation of success made by the Army. Strategy, a realm where political concerns and military means interact, was missing.[141] *In the realm of ends, ways and means, only a well-orchestrated interplay between all instruments of national power will ensure achieving the desired end state.*

4. Despite all odds, the Army initially delivered and flushed out the Miscreants from the majority of Swat within a short period; an unparalleled success, which became one-legged in the wake of political failure. *Even if the Army wins, it will always require requisite political follow up and reforms to consolidate the success for a lasting solution, failing which it would only be an effort in futility.*

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[141]Everett Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Policy in the Space and Information Age*, New Ed ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 20.

5. *Successful Army TTP actually supported the insurgency and assisted insurgent recruiting among the disaffected. In addition, criminals, disenfranchised youth, and Madrassa students mustered in the name of anti U.S. sentiments, Jihad and Sharia not only made an effective pipeline for insurgents but also made the dynamics even more complex. National level effort cannot be replaced by tactical pursuits.*

6. In an effort to gain quick political mileage from military victory, the provincial government hastily brokered a peace agreement of appeasement and overlooked its management. The core rationale of the insurgency, imposition of Sharia, was not addressed. A quickly negotiated political agreement wasted theArmy's achievements and sacrifices. *Comprehensive Politico-Military strategy will only lead to achieving national objectives in a COIN environment.*

7. Having lost in Phase-I and spending the winters in mountains, reinforced militants, filled with vengeance improved their tactics and resolve. This time they transited to urban areas for which the Army were neither trained nor equipped. Avoidance of collateral damage and fighting in built up area with limited number of troops available slowed the progress of operations and raised concern among impatient citizens to undermine the Army's resolve and ability to combat COIN. *Perception management requires dedicated efforts. Similarly fighting urban terrorism in one's own country is very challenging and requires special training and an emphasis on development.*

8. There was just no alternate available to the Army to consolidate its gains and establish governance, through a clear, hold, and build approach. The Army did not have enough troops to leave behind and protect the areas cleared through fighting and sacrifices. Hence, the gains eroded soon after they were made. *Availability of commensurate law enforcing agencies, effective civilian administration and peoples' mechanism in the form of local defense committees are essential to consolidate the military gains and lead counter COIN operation to its logical end.*

9. In spite of clearing militant strongholds repeatedly, due to paucity of troops and at times lack of sound COIN understanding, the areas could not be sanitized and resultantly were again reoccupied by the Taliban. *In order to create long term effects and give the people confidence on the resolution and longevity of military operations fruition, clear, hold, and build policy has to be adopted and implemented in any future operations in the valley.*

10. Militant leadership being the center of gravity could not be eliminated through conventional operations, as they remained beyond reach, roving and well protected in their hideouts. This could best be done through covert means, where the Army failed. *Again, an effective intelligence system can really be a force multiplier in COIN. It was required to upgrade, restructure and re-organize the intelligence network in Swat to ensure that the militant leadership is neutralized.*

11. COIN operations are not time bounded and hence protracted in nature. At the end, military forces or the insurgents*, the one who displays perseverance will ultimately decide the fate of such operations.*

12. Popular sentiment of locals, in favour of imposition of Sharia, indicated that the Army had come on the behest of the Khans or Notables to fight their war. *Use of force in an unfavourable environment and divided society cannot create a unison or unity of effort.*

13. In spite of causalities inflicted upon the militants, their reinforcements and material support continued from the adjoining areas, through the FATA. Killing them saw only more influx of militants, as the ones in the FATA and Afghanistan

felt an obligation to support their brother in arms. *Fighting in COIN needs to be all encompassing and spread to simultaneously engage the enemy at all fronts. Terrain contiguous to the AO, under militant control, will always pose problems for the forces conducting COIN.*

14. Sharia law, in the judicial spheres only, was the single rallying point that the insurgents were using to gain support from the people. The militants expertly exploited the religious inclination of the people of Swat to further their own agenda. Imposition of Sharia law advertised as their sole demand and the reason for their popularity in some quarters was a façade that was not targeted. *Before the commencement of the next stage of operations, this façade must be unveiled for the locals to see the true designs of the militants.* [142]

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[142]Saqib Ahmed, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.

Operation Rah-e-Rast (Swat -2)

By early 2009, the situation in Swat had substantially deteriorated. The militants began expanding in the entire valley and started operating with impunity in areas where the Army still considered itself in control.[143] Apart from the expanding militant influence, the problem for the government and LEA's was the support of a large majority of the locals for the antigovernment activities and the rallying cry of the Taliban i.e. imposition of Sharia law. The dynamics of the situation had changed drastically.[144] It was no longer a problem which involved the insurgents and the counterinsurgents but a problem which now was being heavily influenced by the behavior and attitude of the civilian populace. This caused a change in the reframing of the problem.[145] A purely military solution was no longer an option to defeat this intense insurgency. It required a carefully thought out and implemented politico-military strategy which had the capability of dealing with the sentiments of the locals and at the same time create the conditions which would enable an effective use of the armed forces. Not only did the sentiments of the people of Swat required careful attention but the nation as a whole had to be sensitized to deal with the menace of insurgency. In order to gain legitimacy a much more broader and flexible approach had to be considered. It was realized that the issue being faced was internal and that an all measures acceptable internally had to be resorted to gain the momentum back from the insurgents.

In order to address the changed environment, the government decided on a new approach i.e. either dealing with the insurgency through peaceful means or the use of force lay in talks. These parleys, overtures, and concessions would aim to address the rallying call of the Taliban

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[143]Associated Press, "*Army holds key parts of Mingora as battle for Swat valley continues*," France24, May 24, 2009. http://www.france24.com/en/20090524-battle-swat-valley-continues-pakistan-taliban-mingora (accessed October 6, 2010).

[144]Syed Hassan, "*Swat Taliban find Sharia a challenge*," BBC News, March 24, 2009. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7959100.stm (accessed October 5, 2010).

[145]School of Advance Military Studies, *Art of Design* - Student Text Version 2.0 (Fort Leavenworth: SAMS, 2010), 243.

which was imposition of Sharia law. Though it sounded defeatist and gave the impression that the efforts of the previous year and half were negated, it was essential. It was essential firstly for the reason that if the insurgents were actually serious in only the imposition of Sharia law in the legal sphere and that its implementation would bring peace then it would serve the overarching purpose. Secondly and most probably if the Taliban were not serious in bringing peace and had greater designs for their totalitarian rule and hegemony then their maliciousness will be unveiled to the people. The sincerity of the government in giving peace a chance at the cost of unprecedented concessions and compromising on a few core beliefs would bring a change of heart by the locals. The insurgents after being offered a chance to give people their long awaited shot at tranquility and then losing it through self-serving interests would stand alone with little to no popular support.[146] This theme was founded on the following guiding thoughts:

1.   Talking with the Taliban is a "win win situation" - if the talks succeed and the terms are implemented in all sincerity, peace will be brought without bloodshed. If the talks fail – and the terms are not implemented by the Taliban, their local support will diminish and they would stand alone in their fight.
2.   Parleys and concessions might be a hard pill to swallow - but if the overarching aim is achieved then it is worth it.
3.   Local inhibitions and demands must be addressed, even if they do not fit into the paradigm that "*we*" are comfortable with.
4.   Operating with a moral high ground, as judged by the locals, is extremely important in fighting militancy, especially the one that fosters and gains strength on indigenous support.
5.   Peoples' support is not possible by just winning hearts and minds through reconstruction etc., while the root cause remains unresolved. Let the people decide on what course of action has to be adopted after giving them a clear and fair picture of our sincerity and the other side's ambitions vis-à-vis addressing the core issue.
6.   Involve the locals in parleys with the militants. Let them have a say and then they will feel responsible if the militants do not measure up to their commitments. Their active participation would either make the militants buckle under pressure or turn them against each other.[147]

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[146]Robert Mackey, "*Sifting Through 'Debris of the Past' to Make Sense of Pakistan's Taliban Problem,*" New York Times, May 14, 2009. http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/14/pakistans-daily-show-diplomacy/ (accessed September 16, 2010).

[147]Saqib Ahmed, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US..

In order to convince the people of Swat regarding the sincerity of the government in fulfilling their demands and taking the root cause away from the militants the provincial government conducted negotiations with TNSM's chief Sufi Muhammad. As a result of these negotiations, the government stopped military operations and agreed to establish Sharia Nizam-e-Adl (Sharia courts) in the entire Malakand District, including Swat. From the Taliban side it was assured that all militant activities would be ceased and that the writ of the government would be respected. Within this purview the President of Pakistan signed the Sharia regulation on 13 April 2009.[148]

The signing and implementation of the Sharia regulation drew both national and international criticism as the government's act was considered as capitulation in the face of threats posed by the extremists.[149] However, from the governments' point of view, the regulation was passed with an intention of giving peace a chance through talks which if failed would expose the intentions of the militants and give the moral high ground for waging a decisive campaign against them.[150] The Sharia regulation's implementation commenced with the establishment of courts and appointment of Sharia judges.[151] The people of Swat welcomed the government's decision and whole heartedly supported the disarming and dismantling of the Taliban organization. As for the civilian populace, the demand of the Taliban and the locals had been met

[148]Raja Asghar, "*Sharia for Malakand as Zardari signs law*," Dawn, April 13, 2009. http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/national+assembly+passes+nizam-e-adl (accessed September 9, 2010).

[149]Arhsad Mohammad, "*Clinton says Pakistan is abdicating to the Taliban*," Reuters Foundation, April 23, 2009. http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE53L69J20090423?pageNumber=1&virtualBrandChannel=0 (accessed October 1, 2010).

[150]Robert Mackey, "*Sifting Through 'Debris of the Past' to Make Sense of Pakistan's Taliban Problem*," New York Times, May 14, 2009. http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/14/pakistans-daily-show-diplomacy/ (accessed September 16, 2010).

[151]Associated Press, "*Grey areas in Nizam-i-Adl Regulation*," Dawn, April 2, 2009. http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/nwfp/grey-areas-in-nizam-i-adl-regulation-hs (accessed October 3, 2010).

and they saw no reason for the former to continue with militancy. The root cause given by the militants for their activities had been addressed.[152] However, as envisaged the Taliban continued to find faults and loopholes in the implementation of Sharia and extended their militant activities in the neighboring district of Buner.[153]

This act proved to be vital in turning the public opinion against them. The people of Swat and the whole nation came to realize that the real intention of the Taliban was to establish a parallel writ and hegemony in the entire district of Malakand. Public outcry of the nation and the people of Swat in particular against the militants came to the fore after their dangerous excesses including the occupation of Buner.[154] Not only did the physical acts of the Taliban foster opposition to them, but Sufi Muhammad's public statements against the judicial process and legislature of the country also proved to be decisive for turning public opinion against them.[155] Within this context, the National Assembly of Pakistan passed a unanimous resolution to launch an all-out national campaign against the militants.[156] Clerics and scholars from around the country started openly campaigning against the Taliban and an overall environment was created to help facilitate the military to launch a decisive campaign for uprooting the militancy.[157]

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[152]Voice of America Correspondent, "*Military Offensive in Pakistan Threatens Swat Peace Deal*," VOANews.Com, http://www.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-04-27-voa5-68823987.html (accessed September 11, 2010).

[153]Ibid.

[154]Carlotta Gall, "*Pakistani Army Poised for New Push Into Swat*," New York Times, May 5, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/06/world/asia/06pstan.html (accessed September 16, 2010).

[155]Zahid Hussain, "*Pakistan troops clash with Taleban as Swat Valley truce breaks down*," Times, May 5, 2009. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6222388.ece (accessed September 20, 2010).

[156]Ahmed Hassan, "*APC endorses Swat Operation*," Dawn, May 19, 2009. http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/16-gilani-urges-national-consensus-as-apc-convenes-hs-16 (accessed October 4, 2010).

[157]Carlotta Gall, "*Pakistani Army Poised for New Push Into Swat*," New York Times, May 5, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/06/world/asia/06pstan.html (accessed September 16, 2010).

With militants now spread over the entire length and breadth of the valley and entrenched within the population hubs and mixed with the populace, it became important to isolate the insurgents from the people. Due to the failure of the Taliban to bring peace through the imposition of Sharia, a vast majority of the populace supported operations against them and agreed to a temporary move out of the Valley to ease the military operations.[158] Approximately two million people from Swat moved to camps just outside the Malakand Division.[159] The battlefield of Swat had now only two main competitors, the military and the Taliban. Intelligence information indicated that all the fighting would primarily take place in the built up areas as the militants had converted the infrastructure of the towns into an extensive defensive layout consisting of bunkers, mines, and strong points.[160] An estimated 4,000 hardcore Taliban, supported by foreign fighters, were to contest the military operations.[161] Within this framework, the following broad parameters were defined before the conduct of Operation Rah-e-Rast:

> 1.   Use of the coercive apparatus of the state against those directly challenging the authority of the state and using intimidation and violence against ordinary people.
> 2.   Political accommodation and dialogue with the people and groups that are looking for peaceful solutions within the framework of Pakistan's constitution and law.
> 3.   Economic development and reconstruction of the militancy – affected areas to fight poverty and underdevelopment so as to offer new opportunities to the militants and others to lead a normal life
> 4.   The impending operation will not be restricted to Swat alone. Complementary and supporting efforts will be launched in the neighboring districts of Dir and Buner, as well as Mohmand and Bajaur, the gateway from

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[158]Imran Shah, "*A large number of IDPs from Swat to other parts of N.W.F.P*," Ground Report, http://www.groundreport.com/Business/A-large-number-of-IDPs-from-Swat-to-other-parts-of_3/2898189 (accessed September 21, 2010).

[159]Ibid.

[160]Griff White, "*Battle for Swat's Main City Begins*," Washington Post, May 24, 2009. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/23/AR2009052301775.html?wprss=rss_world (accessed September 21, 2010).

[161]Michael Heath and Khalid Qayyum, "*Pakistan Says Uzbek, Chechen Fighters Aiding Taliban in Swat*," Bloomberg, http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=a_Dh7ZyHByps&refer=home (accessed September 2, 2010).

Malakand Division to the FATA. The operations will be synchronized in a manner, which would strangulate the militants in these respective areas, and they would be handicapped in reinforcing or supporting each other. In short the militant effort had to be split in order to defeat them in detail.

5.   Within Swat, a three pronged operation Rah-e-Rast, has to be launched to divide the effort of the militants and synergize the efforts of the existing troops located within the Valley.

6.   All militant strongholds will be cleared in the first instance to break the will of the enemy to fight.

7.   Fighting will not be restricted to the population centers alone. Mountains, a readymade hideout and a place to withdraw for the militants, will be secured to ensure that they fight in the ground of military's choice. Having success behind their backs and considering themselves in a position of strength, it would be relatively easy to engage the militants in a decisive fight.

8.   Intelligence and combat units will focus on gathering maximum intelligence on the militant leadership, which has to be targeted at all cost and at a high priority.

9.   A combination of ground and helicopter-landed forces had to be employed to engage the enemy at all fronts simultaneously.

10.   Piochar, the key base for the Talban and the main supply route from Dir not cleared in Operation Rah-e-Haq, has to be secured to choke the militants in the Valley.

11.   The strength of force used for the operation should enable the execution of clear, hold, and build of all the areas which will be cleared from the militants.

12.   The kinetic phase of the operation has to finish quickly so that the displaced personnel can return.

13.   On clearing a specific area, the populace should be encouraged and supported to establish a local security apparatus. This will only be possible once sustained stability is visible to the people.[162]

By end April 2009, the government commenced with operations in Dir and Buner with near- simultaneous operations in Mohmand and Bajaur. In early May, 2009 the government officially directed the military to commence with the operations in Swat.[163] A map of the operation conducted is attached as Appendix 7. The operations in Dir and Buner were extremely important to gain a foothold to the mouth of the valley which would lead to the biggest battle in Swat; the battle for Mingora. Though initially slow-paced, the operations in Dir and Buner started

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[162]Saqib Ahmed, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US..

[163]Noor Haq, *THE OPERATION RAH-E-RAST* (Islamabad: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2009), IX.

progressing with good momentum.[164] The Taliban facing imminent defeat in these two places

reconciled themselves with presenting a last formidable stand in Swat. For the first time they

suffered a huge number of causalities as their self-confidence based on their previous gains

became their biggest enemy and choosing to fight a professional army with thorough operational

preparation based on lessons learnt from Operation Rah-e-Haq took a huge toll on them. In a

ludicrous move to pressure the government, Sufi Muhammad threatened to scratch the peace deal

if the military operations were not stopped.[165] He failed to realize was that the moment for

reconciliation had passed; the Taliban had lost the moral high ground and were facing both the

military and civilian wrath. He along with most of his council were arrested and taken out of the

equation.[166] Fazalullah and most of his commanders were now left. On May 12, Special Forces

conducted a spectacular air landing in Piochar, the nerve center of the militants, while the Army

moved steadily towards Mingora.[167] This daring and surprise maneuver shook the foundations of

the militants. The presence of military forces behind their lines and having their headquarters

captured was a blow from which the Taliban could not recover. Having effectively targeted the

nerve center of the militants, the military pushed ahead in the Swat Valley from the south towards

Mingora and east from Shangla. The battle for Mingora was the bloodiest event in the entire

operation with troops and militants fighting in close quarters in the streets and buildings of

Mingora.[168] On May 23, 2009 the military cleared the entire town and this accentuated the

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[164]Xinhua, "*80 militants killed in Buner operation in Pakistan*," English - People's Daily Online, May 4, 2009. http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/6649943.html (accessed October 5, 2010).

[165]Al Jazeera and Agencies, "*'Civilians flee' Pakistan fighting*," Al Jazeera, http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia/2009/04/200942761933359852.html (accessed October 7, 2010).

[166]BBC News Correspondent, "*Pakistan holds pro-Taliban cleric*," BBC NEWS, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8169385.stm (accessed September 21, 2010).

[167]Zahid Hussain, "*Pakistan drops hundreds of commandos in Taleban's Swat strongholds*," Times, May 13, 2009. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6276121.ece (accessed October 2, 2010).

[168]Griff White, "*Battle for Swat's Main City Begins*," Washington Post, May 24, 2009. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp.

collapse of militancy in Swat.[169] Control over the rest of the Valley was regained with sporadic skirmishes. All the military advances in the Valley linked up and by June14, 2009 active large-scale military operations came to an end.[170]

With sufficient forces in the area, the military were able to hold and build the places cleared in Swat and also announced its plans for permanently positioning forces in the valley to instill confidence in the locals.[171] Other than Fazalullah, most of the militant commanders were either killed or captured.[172] This was a significant achievement not attained during Rah-e-Haq. The loss of leadership left the Taliban rudderless and those who survived the military's onslaught started surrendering in huge numbers.[173] By the end of June 2009, the military and the government agencies were working hand-in-glove to create conditions for the return of the displaced persons back to their homes. The efforts paid off since by August 2009, 1.6 million refugees had returned to their homes, an unprecedented feat in the COIN history of the country.[174]

In addition to resettling and getting their lives back on track, the local population with the help of military started forming lashkars "citizens' police" in their respective areas. [175] These

[169]Reza Sayah, "*Pakistan secures key Swat Valley city*," CNN.com /asia, http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/05/30/pakistan.mingora/index.html (accessed October 2, 2010).

[170]Associated Press, "*Major operation in Malakand completed*," Daily Times, June 15, 2009. http://dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009story_15-6-2009_pg7_13 (accessed October 6, 2010).

[171]Associated Press, "*Army, people united against Taliban*," Daily Times Newspaper, June 13, 2009. http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009story_13-6-2009_pg1_5 (accessed October 4, 2010).

[172]Ismael Khan, "*Swat Taliban mouthpiece, top commander captured*," Dawn Newspaper September 12, 2009. http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/04-muslim-khan-arrested-qs-03 (accessed October 10, 2010)

[173]Ghulam Farooq, "*105 Taliban surrender, 15 killed in Swat clashes*," Daily Times Newspaper, September 2, 2009. http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=20099story_2-9-2009_pg7_6 (accessed October 7, 2010).

[174]Press Trust of India, "*1.6 million Pakistani refugees return home: UN*," Times of India, August 22, 2009. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/4921578.cms (accessed October 4, 2010).

[175]Hameedullah Khan, "*Hundreds join Swat's anti-militant lashkar*," Dawn, September 27, 2009. http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/provinces/04-hundreds-join-swat-lashkar-qs-13 (accessed September 21, 2010).

laskhars were extremely beneficial in firstly creating a sense of responsibility among the locals

and secondly to give them confidence in their own abilities once confronted with the threat from

the Taliban. These lashkars proved to be force multipliers in dealing with the remaining militants.

This progress in the sphere of security and stability coincided with the transformation of the

judicial system in Swat. Recognizing the lack of speedy justice as one of the causes of discontent,

the government started focusing on improving the judicial process whose implementation proved

to satisfy the locals immensely.[176]

Apart from the arrested hardcore militants who were sentenced and imprisoned, a

rehabilitation center was made in Swat in which teenagers recruited by the Taliban were enrolled

under protective custody.[177] This rehabilitation center was responsible for de-radicalizing and re-

integrating these traumatized and misdirected individuals back in the society. This center has

proved to be an instrumental rehabilitation facility against militancy and the spread of radicalism.

Politicians not only came back to Swat but started vigorously interacting with the people and

addressing their problems.[178] Loss of Swat, once again, could not be afforded at any costs.

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[176]Reuters, "*Pakistan's Swat promises justice, to fight Taliban*," Reuters Foundation, March 23, 2010. http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/SGE62M04Y.htm (accessed October 7, 2010).

[177]Interview conducted with Lieutenant Colonel Saqib Janjua, Pakistan Army, attending COIN Doctrine Immersion Course in Fort Leavenworth Kansas on 12 November 2010.

[178]Associated Press, "*Militants on the run, Army to stay in Swat: PM Gilani*," Pak Tribune News, August 11, 2009. http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?217953 (accessed October 11, 2010).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The case study of operations in Swat demonstrates that the tactical level nuances between COIN by external and internal actor are barely distinguishable. The successful COIN practices for an external actor listed in FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency manual of US Army e.g. maintaining a constant, forward presence with the population, acquiring and disseminating accurate and timely intelligence, avoiding overreaction to insurgent activity etc. are those well recognized and established principles which can be clearly related to Swat, thus applicable for an internal actor in COIN.[179] At the operational level however, key COIN concepts especially legitimacy, have a different connotation and therefore require a different approach to achieve.

The difference appears mainly through the context in which both the internal and external actors operate. The major oversight committed in Operation Rah-e-Haq, resulting in its failure, was COIN being undertaken without understanding the real context. The operational approach was similar to how an external force would conduct COIN. It was not realized that contemporary COIN paradigm based on external actors' perspective could not be blindly followed by an internal actor as the context in which both of them operate is different. The main effort during COIN by an external actor is targeted to achieve legitimacy almost from the start for not only its own operations but also for the HN. Each line of effort represents a conceptual category along which the HN government and COIN force commander intend to attack the insurgent strategy and tactics and establish government legitimacy.[180] The legitimacy which the external actor seeks for itself and the HN is not only bounded by the geographical boundaries of the AO but includes the international community as well. Every action of the external actor is viewed critically to find legitimacy or illegitimacy in it. This puts a restriction on the actions of the counterinsurgents as it

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[179]Headquarters Department of Army, *FM 3-24.2 Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2009), 3-10 and 3-11.

[180]Ibid., 3-7.

has to modify its approach with the perception of the HN government, local security forces, and its people, international community, and its domestic audience. The solution space to work with becomes highly constricted and telescoped. Whereas, for the internal actor the solution space is quite wide and thereby provides flexible response options in order to gain the requisite legitimacy. In Swat the highly contentious decision to impose Sharia for gaining public support to alienate the Taliban is a case in point. Though the international audience did sound their reservation against the decision but at that moment their legitimacy did not count for much in the equation. An external actor operating in a context different to this is unlikely to consider such options to achieve legitimacy.

As mentioned above, the external actor has to face an enhanced level of complexity due to the influence of HN, domestic, and international actors on the environment. These actors though seemingly independent affect each other directly or indirectly thereby making them inter-dependent.[181] To fulfill the legitimacy criteria which is acceptable to all is not only difficult but down right impossible as they all are operating in contexts different from one another. On the other hand, for the internal actor the government, security forces, and the majority of the populace have potentials to form a single unified actor as the context which they share is the same. Internal actors cognizant of this fact can easily change the system from being complex to just complicated. Legitimacy in such an environment can be achieved relatively easily. The unveiling of Taliban's hidden agenda in the Swat made all key sub actors of the environment join the government's bandwagon and hence internal legitimacy across the board was achieved. A wave of local and national sentiment rose against the Taliban which was capitalized by the government to order the armed forces to decisively defeat the insurgents. Willing displacement of approximately 1.6 million locals to facilitate operations against the Taliban and formulation of

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[181]John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 76

armed lashkars to support the military speaks volumes about the level of legitimacy gained by the government.

Recommendations

COIN can never be won by both internal and external actors without gaining legitimacy. Having recognized this fact and also established that the concept of legitimacy varies according to the context in which COIN is being conducted makes it imperative that the nuances at the operational level of COIN by both the internal and external actor be recognized. This recognition should lead to acceptance at the international level that operational approaches of both these actors will differ according to the context in which they are operating. Mutual cooperation and expectations between COIN contemporaries will greatly benefit by developing this understanding.

The study of FM 3-24 in light of its comparison with COIN conducted by an internal actor reveals that though it is designed for an external force in the short term, over an extended period it has to be handled by the HN, an internal actor. Therefore, having determined that the fundamental COIN concept of legitimacy for both external actors and internal actors are vastly different, this paradox created by the FM needs to be addressed. The guiding principles of the FM based on historic and contemporary external forces' COIN experiences needs another look, otherwise there will always be a fatal disconnect between an external actor's perceptions on COIN being conducted for the benefit of the HN. The FM may be restructured in a manner whereby it incorporates the internal COIN concepts relevant to the HN. Trying to solve a nation's internal problems with an external view is a recipe for disaster.

Conclusion

COIN is a very intricate form of warfare. The meshing of lethal and nonlethal operations to holistically approach the problem is what makes it so complex and convoluted. The

implementation of this operation is further compounded once its fundamental principles are considered universal and applicable across the board without taking into account the dynamics of the environment and the actors participating in it. Basic similarities notwithstanding, the key concept of legitimacy in COIN conducted by an internal actor in relation to that by external actors is vastly different. The narrative which explains legitimacy has different meanings for both. From an external actor's perspective the number of actors or stake holders in COIN are much more than those involved in COIN by an internal actor e.g. international forces, international community, local people and government, insurgents, plus regional and neighboring countries. These actors make the environment extremely complex and require a different understanding and implementation of the operational level COIN tenants as compared to an internal actor who has relatively fewer actors involved in the environment. The internal actor's COIN narrative and execution has to only take into account its own perspective and interests, whether they conform to the rest of the world's perception or not is of little consequence. Facing an existential threat which is materializing on its own soil makes the dynamics of COIN extremely different from how it is perceived by an external actor who is affected by the threat but not existentially. This threat context and the different approach required to deal with it is the fundamental factor which makes COIN by both the actors different. Since a problem never goes away but just keeps transforming, COIN is much more of a permanent issue for an internal actor than that for an external actor.[182] For an external actor the after effects of a completed COIN, successful or semi-successful, have little repercussions as most of them have to be dealt by the locals and the HN. However for an internal actor, the narrative and the plot have to be tailored to not only conduct COIN but also to deal with the post COIN environment as the responsibility for long term stability rests with it only.
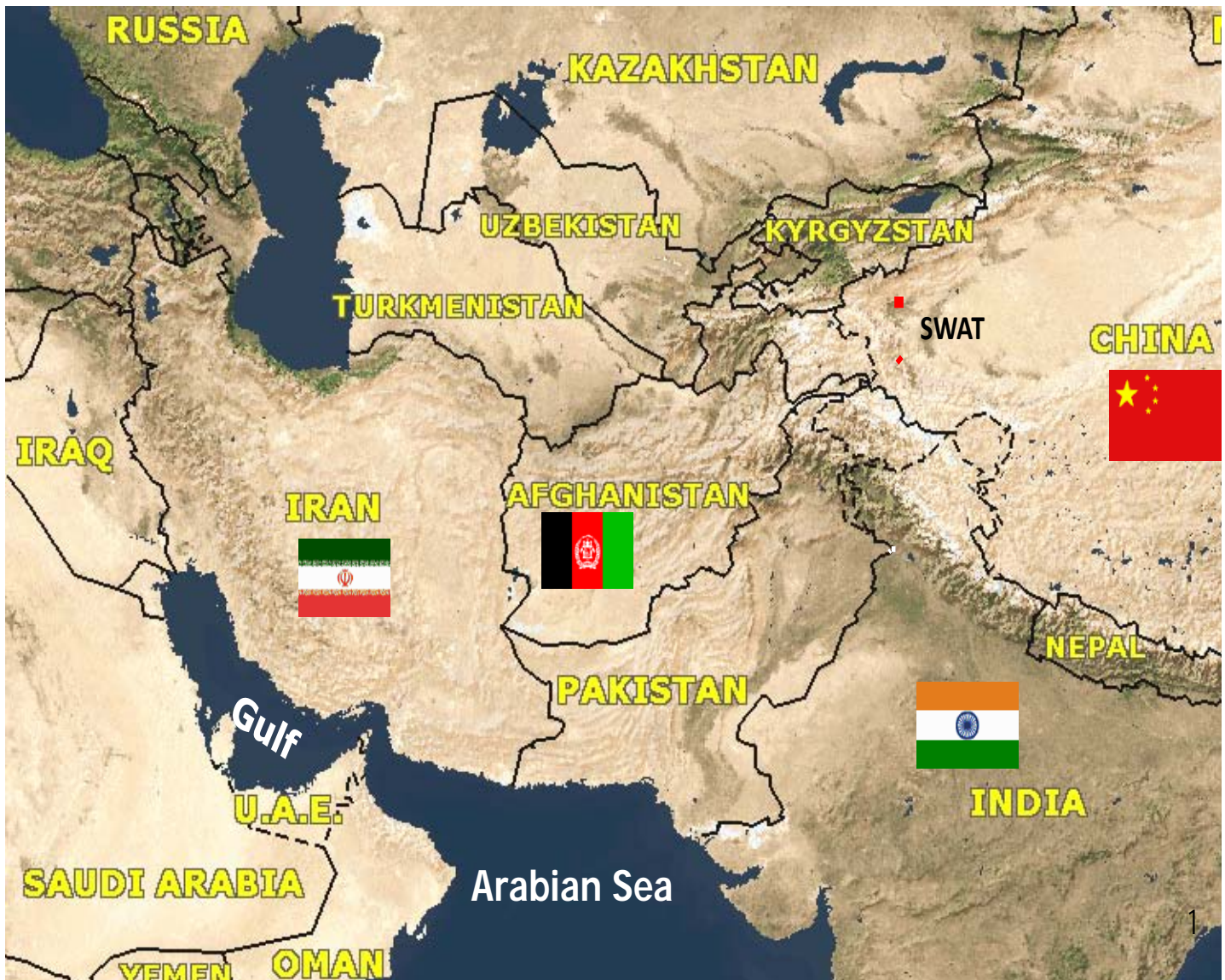
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[182]Meeting with Brigadier General (Retired) Shimon Naveh, Israel Defense Forces, on 18 October 2010 at Leavenworth, Kansas.

These nuances are of extreme importance for both the internal and the external actors to understand. The internal actor has to know that he cannot blindly adapt or take advice from external actors on how to conduct COIN, as the mastery of understanding the environment and dealing with it rests on no one else's shoulder but its own. Therefore, nations used to conducting COIN as external actors need to understand the dynamics of the internal actors and the context which they face while conducting these operations. At times, actions and overtures that seem irresponsible and nonsensical have an internal history or caveat within whose domain the internal actor has to operate. Moreover the internal actor also has to realize the same about the external actor's perception on COIN which is tailored specifically to the context which it is facing. The key is to understand that logic precedes every action and that an understanding of that logic is instrumental in comprehending the conceptual nuances between COIN conducted by both an internal and external actor.[183]
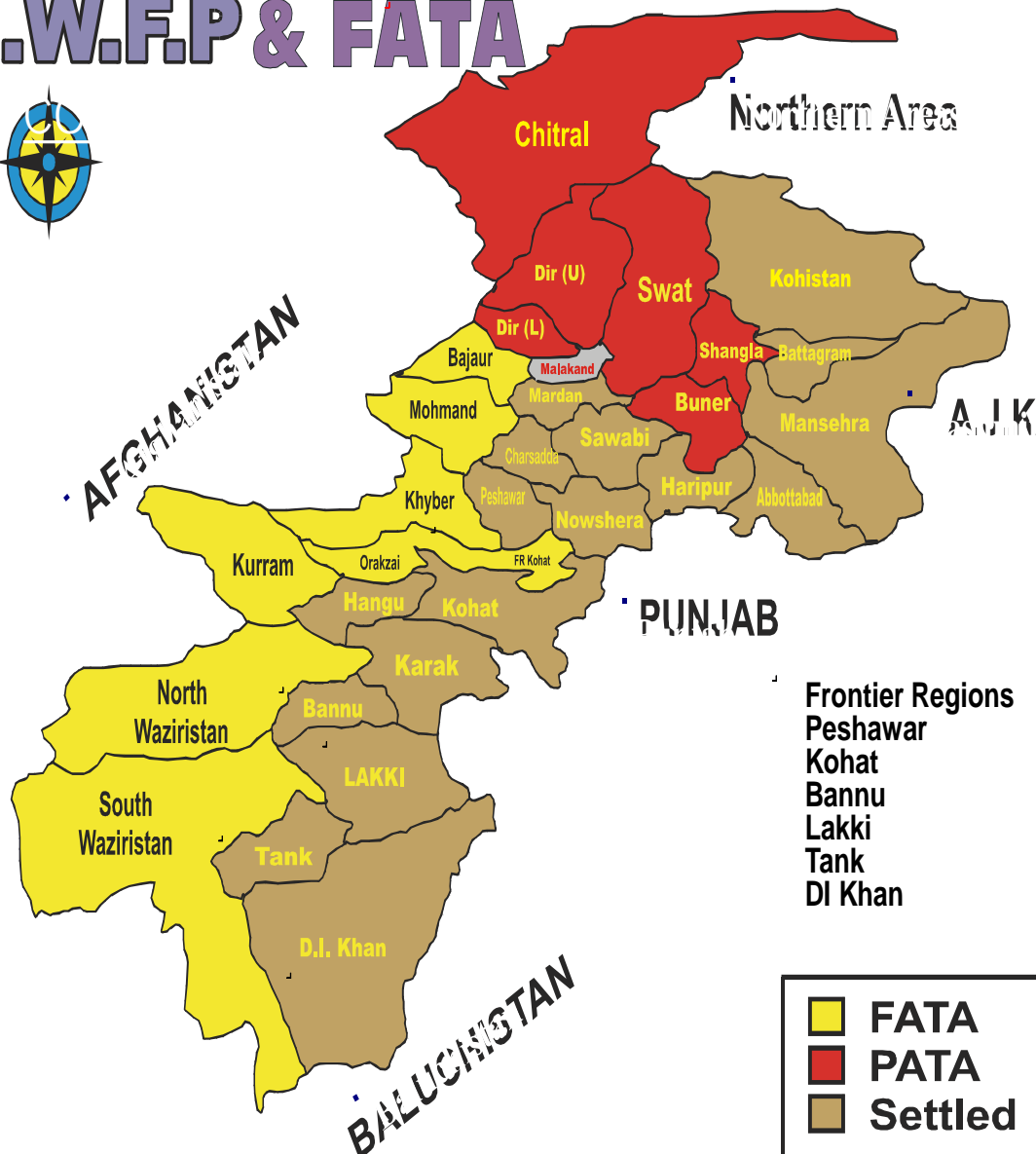
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[183]Ibid.

Swat

N.W.F.P & FATA

Chitral

Northern Area

Dir (U)

Swat

Kohistan

Dir (L)

Bajaur

Shangla   Battagram

Malakand

Mohmand

Mardan

Buner

Mansehra

AJK

Charsadda

Sawabi

Khyber

Peshawar

Haripur

Abbottabad

Nowshera

Kurram

Orakzai

FR Kohat

PUNJAB

Hangu

Kohat

Karak

North
Waziristan

Bannu

LAKKI

South
Waziristan

Tank

D.I. Khan

AFGHANISTAN

BALUCHISTAN

**Frontier Regions
Peshawar
Kohat
Bannu
Lakki
Tank
DI Khan**

🟨	**FATA**
🟥	**PATA**
🟫	**Settled**

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[185]Zahoor Khan, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US..
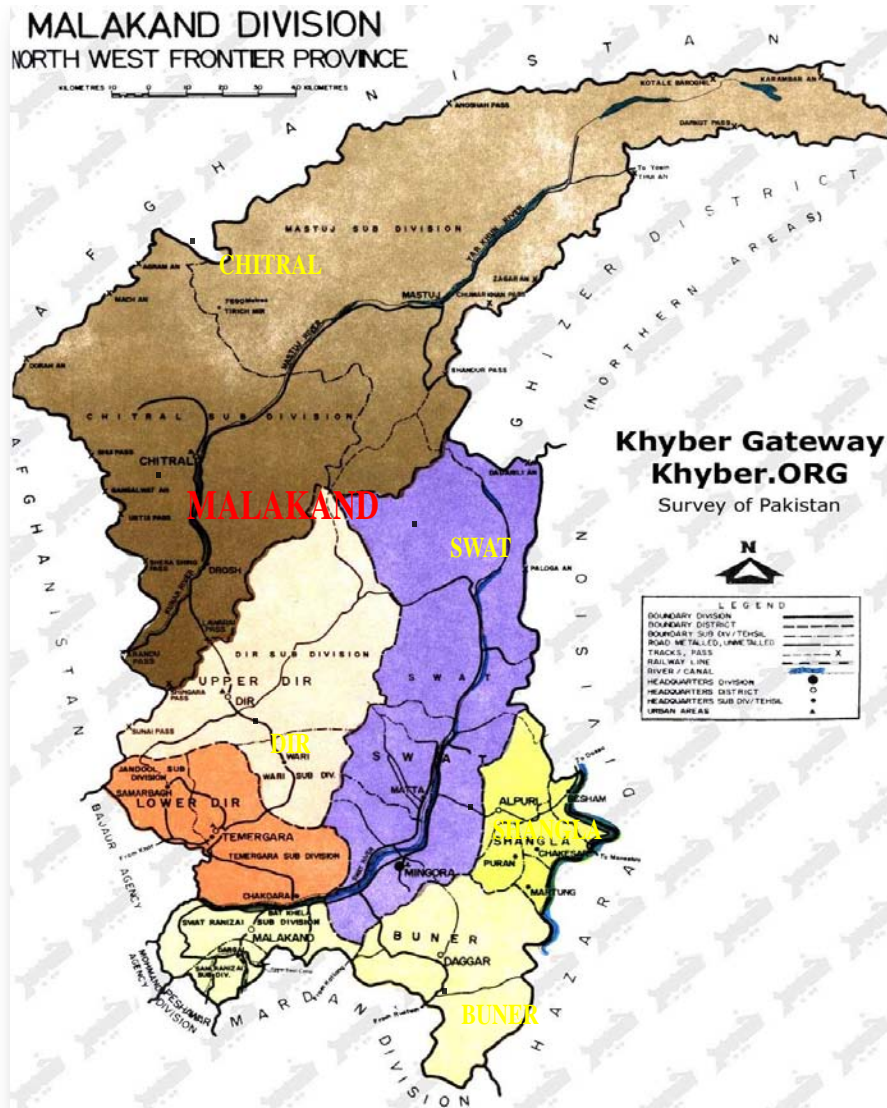
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[186]Zahoor Khan, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.
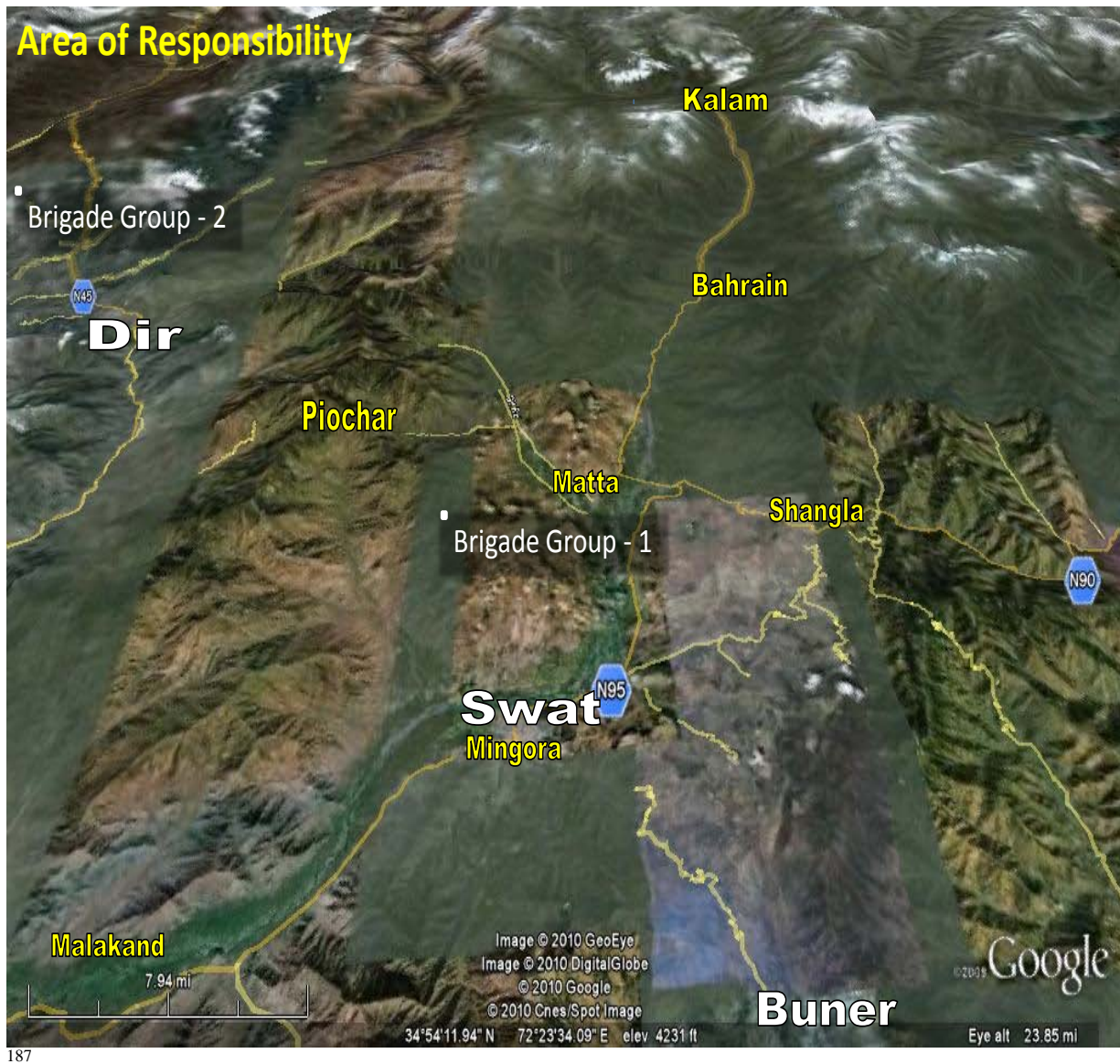
[187]Saqib Ahmed, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.
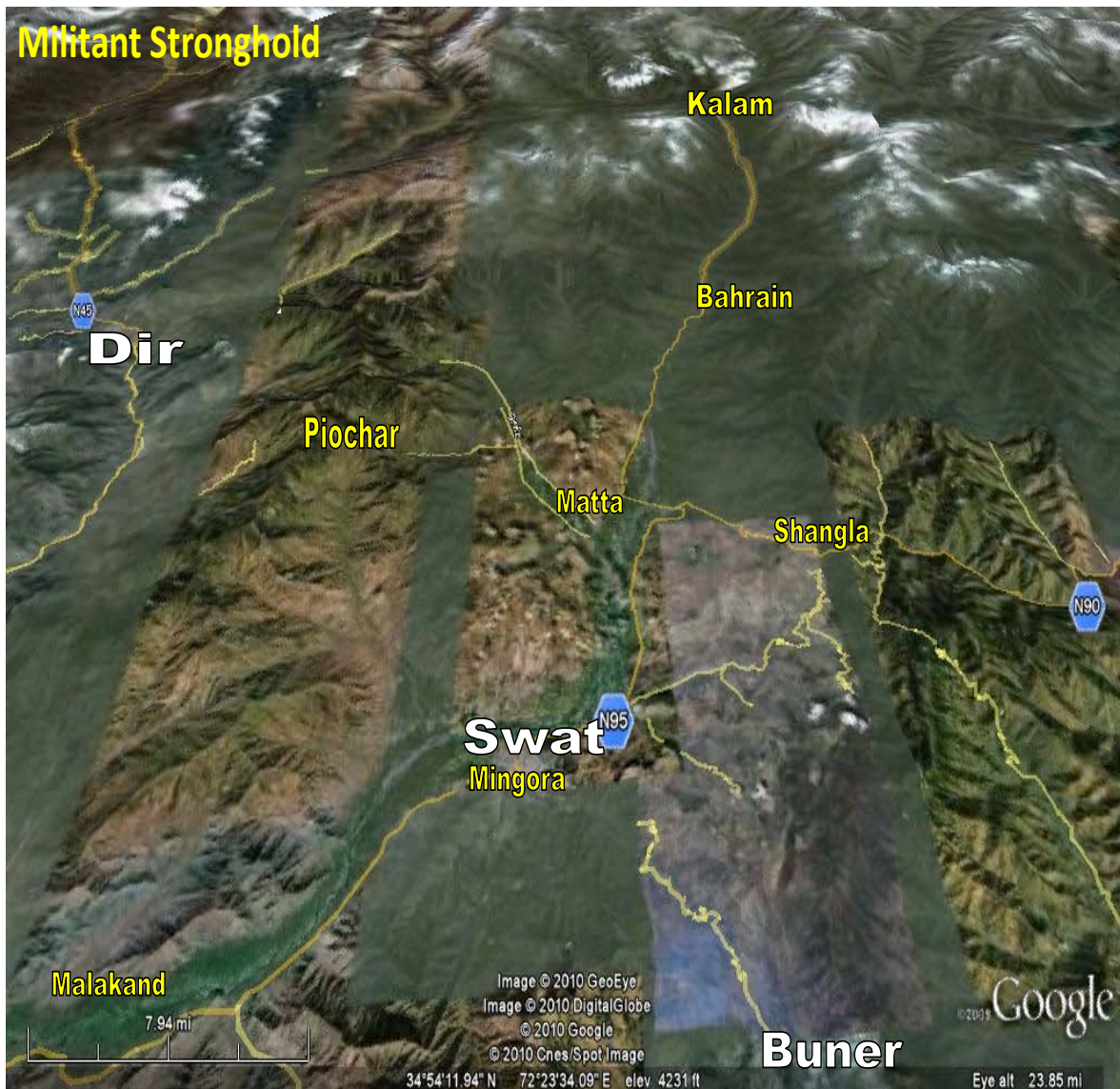
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[188]Saqib Ahmed, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.

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[189]Saqib Ahmed, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.

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[190]Saqib Ahmed, *Swat Operation*, Briefing presented at Doctrine Immersion Course, November 12 2010, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US.

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